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CONSIDERATIONS

UPON

WIT AND MORALS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

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PREFACE.

LA Rochefoucault, la Bruyere and Duclos ſeem to have exhauſted that part of morality which has for its object, Man living in Society, at Court, or in the Metropolis. But although the principle be invariable, man is ſeen in every age, in each reign under different appearances. The ideas which are moſt general in the world, the increaſe of riches and enjoyments, the progreſs of luxury, the ſeverity or weakneſs of government, the force or annihilation of certain prejudices, the greater or leſſer communication of the court with the city, all theſe circumſtances produce conſiderable changes in the morals of a nation. There are diſtempers which totally diſappear, whilſt others ariſe to afflict humanity. It is the ſame with morals.

I deſpair of approaching the model of la Bruyere, which is the beſt reaſon for not following the plan he has traced; but, in renouncing admiration, let me be permitted to pretend to eſteem. It is much better to deſcribe characters, give maxims, and write detached thoughts, ſuch as may call to our mind the excellencies of la Bruyere, than to methodically fatigue the reader in chapters of morality.

Literary productions are for the moſt part too voluminous. Authors are too commonly over-fond of definitions and diviſions, and afterwards, in uniting the parts of their work, the cement fills up more ſpace than the ſtones which compoſe the edifice. There are thoughts and maxims which may throw light upon a ſubject, and at the ſame time be too inſignificant to be accompanied with the apparatus of a treatiſe. Detached thoughts, when they are well expreſſed, produce a greater effect, and are more eaſily retained than if they were confounded with the

the whole matter of a chapter. They awaken the attention of the reader, and ſpare both him and the author an uſeleſs multitude of words.

I have been copious or conciſe, and have written a chapter, given maxims, or delineated characters, according as matter occurred, or as by one means or the other I could more clearly expreſs my thoughts.

In the characters I have traced I had no perſon in view, and I have carefully avoided drawing *portraits*. A character relates to a quality, vice or defect, which is meant to be deſcribed; a portrait aſſembles all the qualities, vices and defects of a perſon, their oppoſites and extent, with all the elements of which that perſon is conſtituted. A faithful portrait belongs to a perſon only, becauſe there are not two perſons in the world who have the ſame phyſiognomy and ſtature, whoſe qualities are in every degree ſimilar, nor between whom they are equally divided. La Bruyere was leſs timid: he introduced into his cha-

characters notorious particulars of conduct, and thereby could not fail of indicating the perſons. He went ſtill farther; he ſpoke of the great events of the times, and of the moſt diſtinguiſhed perſonages, without covering his recitals with the thinneſt veil.

He thus expreſſed himſelf upon William, prince of Orange and king of England:

A man ſaid, "I will croſs the ſea, and "deſpoil my father of his patrimony; I "will drive him, his wife, and his heir "from his ſtates. And as he had ſaid ſo "he acted. What he had moſt to appre-"hend was the reſentment of ſeveral "kings whom he had outraged in the "perſon of one monarch; but they were "his friends, and almoſt ſaid to him, "croſs the ſea, take your father's pro-"perty and poſſeſs yourſelf of his place."

La Bruyere drew portraits which bore no reſemblance except to one man. Such is that of STRATON, whom he repreſents in ſituations ſo rare and conformable to

thoſe

thoſe in which the duke de Lauzun was known to be, that at the time it could not be doubted but la Bruyere had in view this courtier who had experienced ſuch a variety of fortune.

The author thus expreſſes himſelf: "Straton was born under two planets, "happy and unhappy; to the ſame de- "gree his life is a romance: No! It wants "probability. He has had no adven- "tures. He has agreeable dreams, and "ſome diſagreeable ones. What do I "ſay! Nobody dreams as he has lived. "None ever drew more advantages from "deſtiny than he has done. He is ac- "quainted with mediocrity and extremes. "He has made a great figure;—he has "ſuffered."—

In the character of the abſent man there are many ſhades which have eſcaped the count de Brancas, in whom the model of la Bruyere was recognized by all his co-temporaries.

I have

I have carefully avoided giving room for like applications; and, from a moſt ſcrupulous circumſpection, I have ſacrificed ſeveral intereſting details.

If a preface be uſeful, I am of opinion that it is ſo in a work of this kind; when an author means to avoid imputations and make known his intentions. Such is my deſign. I will not ſpeak either of the thoughts or ſtyle in which they are conveyed; what ſignifies it to the public what rules an author has preſcribed himſelf, or what are his ideas, adjuſted according to his talents and manner of perceiving upon the true and beautiful. My intention is to pleaſe, inſtruct, and be intereſting. The work is in the hands of the reader, and will plead better for or againſt the author than all his reaſonings.

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CONSIDERATIONS

UPON

WIT AND MORALS.

PERSONS who excel in ſociety give brevets of Wit as honors are conferred at court, and the public is, to a certain degree, the dupe of theſe uſurped reputations.

Of Wit.

THE vague word Wit is the ſource of an infinity of errors. If, after the manner of the Engliſh, a leſs general expreſſion were uſed, ideas would be more clear and preciſe. The Engliſh ſay a man has parts. The union of well propor-

tioned features, joined to colouring, produces beauty; but a figure may be pleaſing by preſenting ſome agreeable lineaments. A woman, without being handſome, may have ſome beautiful features.

This may be underſtood of Wit. An invention of terms would be neceſſary to deſcribe its different parts. This word, as well as that of loving, has not a ſufficiency of diſtinctive gradations.

A celebrated author pretends that the difference of Wit and Parts is produced by education alone. Such a ſyſtem is ſcarcely worth refutation; its falſeneſs may be demonſtrated without going into the obſcurity of metaphyſics. Facts and the ſlighteſt reflection are ſufficient to prove that the man of genius owes every thing to nature. Were it otherwiſe all the ſtudents in an academy, of painting or ſculpture, would become Rapaels and Bouchardons.

The inſufficiency of ſtudy and practice is apparent in the trifling progreſs made by

by a conſtant application to the games of cheſs and commerce, or to any other game which requires combination. The degree of perfection, at which all are to remain, is very ſoon attained, and beyond this neither attention, avidity, nor ſelf-love, although daily excited, can poſſibly carry us.

I will endeavour to define Wit, that I may fix my ideas, and in ſome meaſure underſtand myſelf.

It appears to me, that Wit may be called the Knowledge of Cauſes, Relations and Effects. Profound Wit goes back to cauſes; that which is extended embraces relations and affinities, and refined Wit conſiſts in immediate judging effects. The laſt kind is a ſpecial gift of diſcernment; it ſeems to belong particularly to women, for which reaſon, it perhaps is, that the Germans attribute to them ſomething prophetical, or relative to divination.

Locke's definition of Wit is undoubtedly

ſuperior to mine. "Wit," ſays he, "conſiſts in diſtinguiſhing reſemblances in objects which differ from each other, and judgment in diſtinguiſhing in what objects which reſemble each other are different." This diſtinction throws much light upon the nature of Wit, and upon that part of it called judgment, which is thereby well defined and eſtabliſhed. But a more ſimple notion muſt be reverted to. Wit is the aptitude of thought, and thought itſelf. Every thing intellectual and phyſical is confined to two operations: conception and production. The man who thinks moſt, and is moſt inclined to thinking, poſſeſſes to the higheſt degree the gift of Wit. How many authors, rigorouſly examined according to this rule, would loſe their reputation. There is more thought in ſingle pages of Montaigne, de la Bruyere and Monteſquieu than in a whole poem.

If ſeveral works were analized, leaving apart manner and colouring, and the attention were to be confined to what is profound and extends the ſphere of the reader's

der's intelligence, we ſhould be aſtoniſhed at the mediocrity of the reſult.

Wit has been compared to the ſight, by which the moſt juſt idea and the livelieſt image is given of it. All its operations may be aſſimilated to thoſe of the eye, which ſeems to be the material ſoul of the body. The properties of Wit and Sight, are the perception of objects, the diſtinction of their forms and difference, the judgment of their diſtance, and ſeeing clearly far and quickly. Theſe relations have been found ſo juſt, that without reaſoning upon their cauſes, the ſame expreſſions are uſed to determine the qualities of Wit and thoſe of ſight: ſagacity, clearneſs, perſpicuity, penetration, ſubtilty; obtuſe, obſcure, are words applied to one and the other. Eyes accuſtomed to certain objects diſcover in them ſhades which eſcape a more penetrating eye, not being in the ſame habitude. In this manner, the eye of a connoiſſeur in painting ſoon diſtinguiſhes a copy from an original; the man of letters, the man of wit, inſtantly diſcovers in a work all that

relates to the ſtyle and genius of a great writer. In the ſimple ſtatement of a propoſition, he quickly diſcovers diſtant conſequences; in a principle ſeemingly unconnected, many applications; in a ſimple idea, ſomething ſublime; and, in a brilliant thought, falſehood and affectation.

If Wit be nothing but thought, if it conſiſts in perceiving clearly, its degrees of elevation muſt be aſſigned; the diſtance of objects meaſured; the obſcurity with which they are ſurrounded, and their complication determined before its qualities can be appreciated; and he who ſhall have penetrated the greateſt obſcurity, or clearly ſeen objects at the greateſt diſtance, will be the man of ſuperior Wit.

Who, according to this principle, can refuſe to Newton, and the Chancellor Bacon who had diſcovered what Newton demonſtrated, the firſt rank among men of ſuperior underſtanding? The diſcovery of the laws of nature certainly required the greateſt etent of genius, and manifeſted

feſted the moſt ſublime conceptions. The knowledge of man; the ſprings by which he acts; the means of directing him, and of ſubjecting his inclinations, ought to place the philoſopher and the legiſlator immediately after. Theſe are the Newtons of the moral world. In the ſame claſs will be found the hiſtorian, who aſſigns the cauſes of the revolutions of empires, the vices of their conſtitution, and who traces, in the ruins of antiquity, the progreſs of human intelligence. Poets form a claſs apart: ſome have talents only, others harmony joined to philoſophy, ſentiment and thought. Rouſſeau frequently devoid of thought and philoſophy, Rouſſeau remarkable for nothing but harmony of ſtyle, and who ſeldom ſpeaks to the heart, may be conſidered as a muſician.

In following the ſame principle, and on examining the extent of the faculty of thinking, thoughts will be diſtinguiſhed as they are profound or enlightening. The reſult will prove, that there is much difference in the merit to be attributed to moral or philoſophical works. It ſeems,

however, that once ranged in a claſs, as upon the ſhelf of a library, one author is, to the generality of obſervers, equal to another. By frequently hearing Montaigne, La Bruyere, La Rochefoucault, and Duclos quoted together, we might be led to believe that their wit was upon a level. However ingenious Duclos may be in his definitions, or of whatever ſagacity he may give proofs in the diſcovery of certain gradations, he is very unequal to Montaigne and La Bruyere. Duclos ſees clearly, but not at a diſtance. He knows men, but they are thoſe of Paris, of a certain circle, in the moment when he writes. He has frequently deſcribed a fugitive being. The horizon of his ideas is circumſcribed. In another age or country Duclos's men will be unknown. This author will be like thoſe painters whoſe pictures are ſought after for no other reaſon than becauſe they ſhew the modes and faſhions of the age in which they are produced. He was, however, quoted twenty years ago with Monteſquieu, Buffon and Jean Jacques Roſſeau. The reaſon of his ſucceſs is eaſily found.

found. His kind of wit, which was preciſion, juſtneſs, and ſagacity, to a certain elevation of idea, gave him great advantages in converſation. It was of Duclos, of whom it was firſt ſaid, *That he had his wit in ready money.* He ſeized with promptitude the objects moſt within the reach of the ſociety of his time, and which were moſt intereſting to it. This muſt have produced the greateſt effect. The moment he wiſhed to elevate himſelf he ſhewed the bounds of his talents. The painter of a few portraits fell beneath mediocrity when he attempted to paint hiſtory. Duclos deſcribed manners, ridicule, vices, and the falſe virtues of thoſe with whom he lived, but he had never lived with Louis XI.

Wit is ſeldom diſcovered in the converſation of men of genius or great talents. As ſoon as they are out of their ſphere, they appear not ſuperior to others, and there is ſome difficulty in reconciling the contradiction between their works and their converſation. Men of eloquence muſt

muſt more particularly feel this diſadvantage. A great theatre is neceſſary to animate them and call forth their talents. Wit is proportioned to the ſubject and circumſtances, but talents require to be entirely developed. Without an eſtabliſhed reputation, it is with difficulty a man can give attention when he reaſons upon a ſubject. Nothing but a ſucceſſion of brilliant thoughts has a great effect in converſation. Subtilties vaniſh, they are loſt in the circle when the auditors are not previouſly prepared by the reputation of the ſpeaker. The eloquent man muſt be excited—rouſed; the man of wit is always maſter of himſelf; his expreſſions fall every where with equal force, and, without being dazzling, illumine every object to which they are directed: thoſe of a man of eloquence or talents are a torrent which overflows one part only; like the poet, he alſo muſt be in the humour. The man of wit always knows the meaſures he is to purſue; he combines, judges and expreſſes himſelf with truth, elegance, and agreeableneſs: the eloquent man is led away by the impulſe

pulſe of ſudden inſpiration, and frequently has no idea of the great effects he is going to produce.

Of the Influence of the Passions.

THE Paſſions, in heating the mind, give a ſoaring to Wit, which naturally it has not. This is another ſource of error to thoſe who judge, becauſe they cannot conceive the means, the wit and ſentiment with which paſſions inſpire the cool and ſedate man, who, in that ſtate, is not above mediocrity. The paſſions improved the perſon of le Kain *. His ignoble ſtature and vulgar features were forgotten; he became elevated and ennobled: Le Kain diſappeared, and his mind gave to his exterior the dignity and grandeur of a hero. It was on reflecting upon the creative power of the paſſions that a lady, to whom ſome of her friends expreſſed their ſurpriſe at

* A celebrated actor.

the

the lover ſhe had choſen, returned for anſwer: *has he ever loved you?*

A man, in whom a certain degree of wit is never diſcovered, except by the aid of ſtimulating paſſions, has not eſſentially that gift from nature.

It may, I believe, be eſtabliſhed as a principle of judging, that a man of ſuperior wit has no need of the paſſions to diſplay it; that they are neceſſary to them of a ſecondary order, and that ſtupidity is applicable to him, from whom, even with theſe aids, no ſpark of wit was ever known to proceed.

There muſt, in the preſent age, be many errors in judgment upon Wit, becauſe the language of men of ſenſe, and that of the arts and ſciences, is more generally acquired; conſequently, it is more eaſy to deceive. Riches and magnificence are not repreſented by a gaudy dreſs, although it be illuſive in the eyes of the vulgar.

At preſent it is eaſy to write upon moſt ſubjects. The inſtigation of knowledge, the innumerable writings, journals, commentaries upon great writers, extracts and critical diſſertations, form a general dictionary of ideas, reſults and judgments, wherein every author finds an aſſortment, and the matter of a work, by mutilating, diſuniting and mingling. Without Wit, a book may be produced upon adminiſtration or morality, and one who is not a poet may write verſes, couplets or comedies. Every body, in matter of Wit, ſeems now to have the neceſſary, but few are thus bleſſed with opulence.

It is by the effect of this increaſe of knowledge that one author, without the leaſt tinge of geometry, may write the eulogium of Newton or Deſcartes, and analize their works; that another, quite ignorant of the military art, may compoſe that of Turenne or the Marſhal Saxe, and in ſome meaſure appreciate their merit, and pronounce upon their faults.

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In the age of Louis XIV. (the age of the greateſt talents) Bernouilly alone would have written the eulogium of Deſcartes, Puiſegur or Feuquieres that of a general. Boſſuet and Fleſchier celebrated Turenne and Condé; but they did nothing more than ſeize and trace the principal parts of their character; they ſpoke neither of their campaigns, nor talents as profeſſional men. At preſent there is no difficulty in writing upon painting, architecture, and muſic, without having the firſt notions of theſe arts.

Talents depend, more than it is generally believed, upon circumſtances, becauſe theſe determine the degree to which they ſoar. Had Fenelon not been preceptor to the duke of Bourgoyne, he would not have compoſed a work of ſentiment and imagination, and to this book only he owes his reputation. A ridiculous adventure furniſhed Piron with the rich and comic ſubject of la Metromanie; without this event he would have been in the claſs of middling authors. If Fontenelle had died

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at the age of forty, known by the Letters of the Chevalier d'Her, his eclogues or the reign of affectation, and his operas, he would not have been equal to Dorat. Determined to another eſſay, after having ſeveral times turned his attention towards objects proper for his genius, he became the luminary of the age in which he lived.

Of Talents for Public Business.

A VERY moderate portion of Wit is ſufficient to inſure ſucceſs in public affairs. The principal functions of men in place conſiſt in deciding upon queſtions already a thouſand times reſolved. A certain activity neceſſary to a prompt execution; a facility in ſeizing details familiar by habitude; the text of a few regulations preſent to the mind; a knowledge of preſcribed forms and cuſtoms, which have acquired the force of law, are all that are requiſite. Knowledge and aſſiſtance are poured on from

from every quarter to a man in place, and the meaſure of them is in proportion to his elevation. Affairs are previouſly examined and diſcuſſed. They are not laid before him until they have in ſome meaſure been ſifted, cleared, and put into ſuch a point of view, that, unleſs he be ſtupid, the deciſion meets his eye. A man endowed with a middling underſtanding, and who has memory and application, may acquire a great reputation, eſpecially if his phyſiognomy be ſenſible, or one which commands reſpect. Experience, moreover, teaches us, that for the moſt part ſucceſs is more due to the character than the genius of the man in place. Theſe are confounded, becauſe to give an idea of merit, it is ſufficient that the end propoſed be attained. The extent of the means are alſo preſumed upon from the importance of the object: Actors are judged by the theatre on which they repreſent. By a conſequence of this manner of judging, we are diſpoſed to refuſe the qualities of the mind to him whom we find unequal to his ſituation and the

character

character assigned him. When we think of the weak and indolent Gaston, we seldom recollect that he was a man of great wit and eloquence. But for the elevation of genius, the statesman must be distinguished from the man fit for business. In every age the first will always be a man superior and rarely met with. The sphere of his talents and genius is immense; that of the latter is narrow and circumscribed. One determines himself by the most profound meditations, and not unfrequently by instantaneous perception which borders upon inspiration; the other ever continues in a beaten track, and knows nothing but the positive; memory to him is more necessary than ideas. If a question of morality be put to a man of business he becomes disconcerted, having no guide, and wanders in darkness, or hides his incapacity under the appearance of disdain. Morality is, on the contrary, a source of knowledge to the statesman and politician, as well as to the philosopher.

It is upon the wit of men of the world

that the moſt falſe judgments are formed. Some men are boaſted of, and exalted in public, who, reduced to their juſt value, appear to be unworthy of the leaſt conſideration, even from the moſt common claſſes. Fatigued by extravagant or ill-founded praiſes, diſguſted with certain perſons, againſt whom it would be dangerous to declare openly, a man of ſenſe feels an inclination to ſay to the winds, *He has the ears of an aſs.*

Of the Wit of Men of the World.

THE reputation of men of the world, who continually attempt Wit, is frequently equivocal. In the firſt place, every thing may be learned, and in every age there is a degree of ability, common to all, by means of a little application. Secondly, rank and fortune previouſly inſure a great number of ſuffrages. The lord, the man of fortune, who have a taſte for letters, have no rivals among their equals: theſe,

on

on the contrary, are flattered by finding talents in their order; they are perſuaded, that if they took pains moſt of them would be diſtinguiſhed for their Wit, like thoſe who are devoted to ſtudy and literature, and who make them their profeſſion. Men of letters, on their part, ſee without envy, talents, of which they know the mediocrity. The verſes of the moſt inſignificant author, would be ſufficient to eſtabliſh the reputation of a man diſtinguiſhed by his birth, employment, or fortune.

The preſent age is that of pretenſion and petty talents, becauſe a man may compoſe himſelf a fund of Wit with the ſame facility as he does a library or cabinet of natural hiſtory.

It is the ſpirit of the age, and not that of the writer, which is found in ſeveral works.

A man of the world catches ſome light ſhades of ſociety, he thinks he has matter

for a piece, and writes a comedy. His friends are in ecſtaſy at his fine penetration, and what is called the ton. All his merit conſiſts in having employed the jargon of a certain claſs, and in having ſeized common occurrences within his reach, which are unintereſting except to a few perſons, and wholly relate to particular circumſtances. The art of theſe deſigns betrays mediocrity as much as it inſures a momentary ſucceſs. To inforce what I have juſt ſaid, I will obſerve, that we ſee amateurs write comedies for private ſociety, which, according to the ſplendor or mode of thoſe of whom it is compoſed, have an ephemeral ſucceſs; but none of theſe authors aſcend to tragedy. A knowledge of the world, of the reigning ton, and of the intrigues of the day, all theſe paſſing ſhades, which are ſenſible to the eyes of every body, which may be caught by the moſt moderate writer, would be of no uſe in making heroes act and ſpeak, nor in touching the heart, elevating the mind, and charming the ear.

Women

Women have ſtill a greater facility in eſtabliſhing themſelves a reputation—they always preſide, and are hearkened to with pleaſure and attention. They can at will change the converſation or lead it to a ſubject familiar to them; perhaps to what they have read in the morning. Men, far from being jealous of their ſucceſs, favour them to a high degree; they are diſpoſed to diſcover delicate wit in their moſt ſimple expreſſions, and give them credit for the moſt ſuperficial knowledge. If to this facility, which women have to excite attention, there be joined the empire of a ſupper, a name, riches, credit, beauty, a goſſip may eaſily be ranked with a la Fayette and a Sevigny. Her reputation once eſtabliſhed, who dare attack it. Society in general would riſe up againſt the audacious being who ſhould attempt to deſtroy an idol, perhaps already conſecrated by a whole generation.

The fame of MONTESQUIEU and VOLTAIRE is particular to themſelves: they created the wit of the age in which they

lived. There are undoubtedly writers among the ancients whoſe wit and talents were equal to theirs, but none who in politics and morals made ſo aſtoniſhing a revolution, who had the ſame influence upon the minds and morals of every claſs of ſociety. The ſentiments and opinions of Monteſquieu and Voltaire extend to all the objects which intereſt the thinking part of mankind.

In every work and converſation there is ſomething either in the thoughts or manner of rendering them, which diſcovers the reading of theſe two great authors. The knowledge which they have ſpread contributes to people the world with half learned men, becauſe they have rendered new and intereſting ideas in ſuch a manner as to be within the reach of a common capacity. Some think they take from their own ſtores that which they owe to the general maſs of riches. A few maxims from Monteſquieu are ſufficient to compoſe a work upon governments; his thoughts are like gold, of which a little quantity ſerves to gild a great extent.

Others

Others think themſelves philoſophers when they have mingled a few of Voltaire's ideas with their own, and have endeavoured to ſeize his manner and purſue the path he has opened.

Of Converſation.

THE wit of converſation is another ſource of error; the number of admiſſible ideas is circumſcribed; it is more exerciſed upon perſons than upon things. Perſons muſt be delicately treated, and reaſonings upon a ſubject would be fatiguing. The man of the world muſt therefore create himſelf an art of ſpeaking without ſaying any thing. Ton, manner, levity, inſure his ſucceſs; he is permitted to be ingenious but never profound. Imagination ſeems to be the kind of Wit which muſt beſt ſucceed in the world, becauſe it multiplies the terms of expreſſion whereby the ſame things are variouſly and more or leſs ſatirically rendered. A ſmall

fund of ideas is ſufficient to ſucceed in the world; it is neceſſary even that it ſhould not be too conſiderable; the ſucceſſes of the man of the world conſiſt rather in what he has not than in that which he poſſeſſes. I have ſeen men whom I thought amiable or ſenſible becauſe their company was ſought after: I aſked in what their merit conſiſted? They are ſure in ſociety, was the anſwer I received.—The walls are ſtill more ſo.

A man who is quoted and careſſed in ſociety ought not to ſwell with preſumption. Had he a greater portion of Wit, were he endowed with a ſtrong imagination, and had a decided character, he would not be ſo well received.

This amiable man, who knows a few ſtories, which he looks upon as his patrimony, and who poſſeſſes the ſole right of relating them;—who has a perfect knowledge of the manners and conventions of ſociety, and delicately ridicules thoſe who, from contempt or ignorance, neglect them—

them,—this man, who thinks himſelf ſuperior to others, is inſipid in a *tête à tête*, and reduced to an ignorant ſilence in the converſation of men of wit or information; for which reaſon he finds them tireſome pedants, and, according to the conſtant cuſtom of fools, calls them metaphyſicians.

Wit in converſation is merely relative, and when one man ſpeaks favourably of another of the ſame ſociety, it frequently happens that all to be inferred from it is, that the latter has more wit than the former.

Men of genius have ſeldom had an advantage in converſation before they have been announced as ſuch: they produce no effect without being preceded by their reputation. They are then permitted to have the common circle of ideas becauſe of the rarity, and that their hearers may ſay they underſtood them. The ſelf-love of theſe is intereſted in giving to them, for ſome time, a favourable attention; but their

their converſation, were it daily, would be too ſtrong a food for the mind.

Moſt of thoſe, who in ſociety are comprehended under the vague denomination of men of wit, have fewer rights than pretenſions.

An amiable man in ſociety, if it be of the firſt rank; he who has ſome talents for buſineſs; he who carefully preſerves a few verſes in his pocket-book, and artfully recites them to a well-diſpoſed audience; he who has written one ſong in his life, or a little cloſet-piece, which is no more than the recital of ſome intrigue of ſociety; he who underſtands Engliſh, and has been in England, who talks of gardens and greenſward, who ſays *ſite* inſtead of *ſituation*, and that a thing is forcibly *pronounced* inſtead of *expreſſed*, who employs the words *data* and *maſs*, who ſays *un faire large* ou meſquin*, who is the humble ſer-

* Thoſe to whom the French language is familiar, will feel the ſatrie conveyed by this expreſſion, but it would be in vain to attempt a tranſlation of it.

vant

vant of a woman of conſideration, the friend of a celebrated author, the lover of a female wit—he who gives dinners to men of letters, who knows by heart a few verſes of a work not yet printed;—all theſe believe themſelves to be men of wit, and gain the reputation of it if they have but the leaſt acceſs to ſociety.

Nothing is more difficult than to judge of wit and talents. He who attempts it ought to be liberally endowed with both, and men of the greateſt genius are not always they who judge the moſt infallibly. It is commonly ſaid, that they have the talent of extracting wit from thoſe who ſeem to have the leaſt of it. This I take to be the reaſon. The more a man is elevated, and the fewer are his efforts to become ſo, the more he thinks it natural that others ſhould be equal to himſelf. When a man of mediocrity repeats an axiom, a reſult which proceeds from memory only, the man of genius is inclined to believe that he has uſed the neceſſary means to diſcover that truth: incapable of

appro-

appropriating to himſelf the ideas of others, he eaſily believes that all men think for themſelves. Who then are they, from whoſe judgment lies no appeal? The public only, it will be anſwered. It is the many-headed monſter: what eſcapes one meets the eyes of another; each examines a part, and the reſult from the oppoſition of opinions, forms a judgment not to be excepted againſt.

There is a tribunal, of which the judgments are more ſpeedy, and at the ſame time as unexceptionable as that of the public—the tribunal of fools. They have a manner which approaches divination of diſcovering or rather feeling wit. The firſt homage which a man of ſuperior underſtanding receives, is the hatred of fools: they haſten to pronounce a rigorous ſentence againſt thoſe, who by their wit and talents, are elevated above them. Their weak eyes diſcover light by the pain it gives them. Fools are ſooner informed by their fears than others by their diſcernment.

Let

Let us, in this reſpect, admire that Providence which inſtinctively inclines men to put at a diſtance that which is offenſive. The republic of fools, after the example of one of the ancients, always adviſes the heads of ſhrubs and flowers, which exceed the common height, to be cut off. Fools muſt triumph; they hold together; they form a corps, and have a language particular to themſelves. "He is a dan-"gerous, an extraordinary man; a man of "ſyſtems; a metaphyſician; a madman." Theſe are the words conſecrated by fools, to deſcribe a man of ſuperior underſtanding.

Of the Progress of Wit.

IN reflecting upon the Progreſs of Wit and Knowledge, upon their general diſtribution, and upon the immenſe number of works of every kind, it ſeems that the time will

will come when it will be as impoſſible as it would be uſeleſs to poſſeſs wit and talents. The extent of thought will be like a vaſt country, the maſs of which will be traced upon a great ſcale, and whoſe ſmalleſt parts will be known. Montaigne, la Rochefoucault, la Bruyere, Duclos, Richardſon, and Voltaire, in his philoſophical romances, have greatly advanced diſcoveries in morality. When philoſophers ſhall have thrown more lights upon this ſubject, and when the ſmalleſt receſſes of ſelf-love ſhall be known——when all the ſeeming contradictions of man ſhall be explained, and dramatic authors ſhall have put into action, and expoſed to view, that which is now in maxims—when the ſymptoms, the pantomime of the paſſions, ſhall be indicated and known, their accents noted, and their jeſts delineated; man thus expoſed to the eyes of all will be like a clock without a caſe, in which the ſprings are expoſed to view, and the movements followed by the eye.

Every thing will then be reduced to axioms

axioms and unvaried maxims; none will escape general penetration. The truth and falsehood of sentiment will be known by signs formerly imperceptible, and which exercised all the sagacity of the observer. A woman will know to a certainty if she be loved, and to what degree, by him who professes affection for her; there will appear infallible symptoms by which it will be discovered, if the attachment proceeds from an imagination exalted, or vanity flattered;—whether her lover follows the impulsion of his feelings only, or yields to a real passion.

Every kind of wit will be known; there will be thermometers to indicate and fix its degrees. It will be proved, that wit of a certain kind is incompatible with that of any other; what belongs to character and what to wit will be distinguished and assigned. By certain characteristics and manœuvres, it will be previously known that a man will become a great minister or a great general. Every physiognomy submitted to certain rules, and a prompt

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and certain judgment will no longer command unmerited reſpect.

At this epocha, no more books will be written; every mind will be ſatiated. What works could authors compoſe? The field of politics and morals will be entirely cleared, and every thing comic or tragic exhauſted and familiar to all the world.

It is to be imagined, that at this time of general knowledge and ſatiety, converſation will be very languiſhing. Every thought will be reduced to a proverb or a ſentence: —there will be thoughts upon every ſubject, and education will probably conſiſt in inculcating three or four volumes of proverbs. It will be ſo eaſy to compoſe verſes, that the talent of writing them will be no longer a merit; they will be centos and hemiſtiches taken from every known work.—Will adminiſtration offer a great career to the mind? I think not. Its ſphere is narrower than it is generally imagined; its principles are known, and morality only prevents the application of them;

them; the minister is embarrassed by an assemblage of contradictions; governments wish the people to be happy, and endeavour to simplify the system of imposts; the word beneficence is in every mouth; but ancient abuses, the delirium of war, the blindness of practice, will, for a long time to come, force such demands upon the people as they cannot with facility answer.

Let imposts be reduced to the level of the power of those on whom they fall, and from that moment the wisest end of the œconomical science will be attained. Destructive impositions will be suppressed, a proportionable tribute established, and commerce free and flourishing. Monarchs wish for a great commerce, yet they follow it through all its degrees to load it with shackles: this is like desiring a man to dance, and obliging him to do it in leaden shoes. In following the simple method I have just pointed out, which leaves nothing for the mind to employ itself upon, and requires no great combinations,

morals will be re-eſtabliſhed, and luxury deſtroyed;—the people will be at their eaſe, and their capital no longer monſtrouſly diſproportioned—every thing will be in order.

When three or four bankruptcies ſhall have proved to nations the inconvenience of forced credit; when men, informed by experience, ſhall be able to foreſee the epocha when it will be dangerous to lend, governments will be under the neceſſity of ſetting bounds to their expences, and war will become leſs frequent——a long peace will then give the enjoyment of that happineſs which is found in apathy.

What reſource therefore will be left to the human mind, agitated by its own energy, whereby it may manifeſt itſelf? Will it be found in eloquence? This is baniſhed from monarchies, and figure, metaphor and great emotions will be indicated by rules. Education will accelerate this progreſs. When a judicious and ſenſible plan, appropriated to our manners, ſhall

ſhall be ſubſtituted to prevent forms, the ſciences only will ſerve as aliment to the mind; but general inactivity will not permit a great application.

In this ſtate of languor, wherein men will be led by the courſe of things, there will, perhaps, be no other reſource, in ten or twelve generations, than that of a deluge to overwhelm all in a ſtate of ignorance. Then a new race of men will begin to deſcribe the ſame circle, upon which we, perhaps, are already farther advanced than we imagine.

The mind, like the body, extends and fortifies itſelf, and is weakened or deſtroyed for want of aliment.

It is common enough to ſee perſons who, in their youth, have had the reputation of men of wit, which they cannot ſupport at the age of forty. The vivacity of early years, the ardour of the paſſions, the novelty of objects, the air of gaiety with which they are embelliſhed, the taſte

and fashion of the moment, all these in their youth gave a spring to their faculties. Whilst young men, they were interested and animated; they thought; they felt; but when they became familiarized to objects, and were no longer heated by the passions, the vivacity of their sentiments diminished; their mind, for want of exercise, became languid, and was confined to a very few thoughts and expressions. They lost all their merit in the first revolution of taste and fashion.

The passions have but a time. It is the habitude of reflection, the sciences, literature, or public business, which nourish and fortify the mind and prolong its duration.

Women experience this vicissitude in a more sensible manner. Their agreeableness of figure, and the desires of men create an illusion in female minds. The ravages of a few years act equally upon the charms of their mind and person. For the former, they have no other aliment, no other resource

ſource than the belles lettres, which, to a woman diſſipated in her youth, are but feeble ſuccours, or perhaps devotional intrigues, which are ſoon out of faſhion; or thoſe of public affairs, and theſe, in many reſpects, are beyond the reach of moſt women.

In proportion as a perſon poſſeſſes a greater fund of real property, he has leſs need of ſpecie; ſo in proportion as he has a greater degree of conception, knowledge is leſs eſſential to him.

The mind which is not warmed by the ſoul, and elevated by its emotions, may be ſubtle and ſagacious, but it never attains the elevation of genius. Like a weak flame, it ſpreads light without communicating warmth. It may ſerve to direct mankind, but alone it never gains them over by irreſiſtible perſuaſion: the ſoul only can act on kindred ſouls *. There

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* The reader may, if he pleaſes, conſult Mr. Locke and Lord Bacon. M. Meïllan ſeems to have read

are perſons who obtain from the public a momentary reputation of wit, but to whom men of information refuſe their ſuffrages. Others found a leſs brilliant one, but equally temporary, upon the opinion of connoiſſeurs.

Suppoſe a man to have a great falſe diamond; it dazzles the multitude, who pay but little attention to a precious ſtone of a leſſer ſize: lapidaries only can appreciate its value.

It is common enough to hear wit and good ſenſe diſtinguiſhed, and one boaſted of at the expence of the other. Men of mediocrity excel in the art of diſcovering the faults of men of wit, and they have their reaſons for giving every preference to what they call good ſenſe. But

read them both. The mind, *mens*, a thinking intelligent being, is cultivated by logic and ethics; ſee Mr. Locke. The ſoul, *anima*, according to philoſophers, is a ſpiritual ſubſtance, which animates the bodies of living creatures; ſee Lord Bacon. T.

do they underſtand what they ſay? This is doubtful. A vigorous courſer, which impetuouſly ſprings into a great plain, and with a nimble leap clears the wideſt ditches, ſometimes ſtumbles, whilſt a horſe not half ſo ſtrong, with ſure and eaſy ſteps, runs over a little ſpace.

Of Good Sense.

GOOD Senſe is a feeble light which illumines a confined horizon, and is ſufficient to conduct him ſafely whoſe view is not extended beyond it.

When we are old, we ſhorten our days by taſting the pleaſures of youth—this is the language of good ſenſe.

"Old age is a tyrant, which forbids,

" under pain of death, the pleaſures of " youth—this the expreſſion of wit *."

A man's having ſome knowledge of things, foreign to his profeſſion, is frequently ſufficient to gain him the reputation of a man of wit, and the degree of it is almoſt in proportion to his rank and fortune. It is thus that in academies a man of the world is received without much difficulty, and yet he makes one among men of both wit and talents.

ORONTE has all his life wiſhed to have wit, and has ſpared neither care nor pains to obtain the reputation of it. From his youth he connected himſelf with encyclopediſts and politicians, to be counted one among them, to ſupport his reputation by theirs, and eſtabliſh himſelf a wit in their retinue. A penſion upon the Mercury becomes vacant, a place in the Academy is to be filled up. ORONTE intrigues and cabals in favour of ſome one;

* La Rochefoucault.

all

all men of letters, and thoſe who have pretenſions to wit, are within his juriſdiction: his name muſt figure with every event intereſting to literature. Aſſiduous in the rendezvous of wit, he preſents ſtrangers there, and makes his collection, that he may ſhine in other circles and diſplay his parts to women. ORONTE has made three pilgrimages to Ferney, and ſhews flattering letters which he received from the Patriarch of literature. He underſtands Greek and Latin; ſpeaks Engliſh, has travelled in England, and is in ecſtaſy when he talks of the verdure of Britiſh trees and meadows. He has attended at a courſe of lectures upon chymiſtry, anatomy, architecture, muſic, and painting.—Without being of the military profeſſion, he ſpeaks with aſſurance of war and tactics. What do I ſay?—He can write a work upon the ſciences, upon political œconomy, which will contain what every body knows, and he only will believe he has written ſomething new. ORONTE is the friend of the author in faſhion; it is he to whom application is made to obtain a firſt reading.

His

His converſation is full of new expreſſions; and, according to the reigning ton, he is gay, ſuſceptible, a teller of idle ſtories, the man of pleaſantry, the politician or the philoſopher; but all theſe without any thing natural, without animation, agreeableneſs, or depth of penetration. Thirty years have revolved in this painful occupation. What uſeleſs cares, ORONTE! I have never heard you ſpoken of as a man of wit.

One ſonnet and a few madrigals were formerly ſufficient to give reputation to a poet. At preſent the author of a dramatic piece, which has had ſome ſucceſs, is ſcarcely ſpoken of.

Buffon ſays, "It does not occur to us "that the aſs would in himſelf, and to "our eyes, be the firſt, the fineſt, the "beſt proportioned and moſt diſtinguiſhed "of all animals, if we had never ſeen a "horſe. Inſtead of his being the firſt, "he is the ſecond, and for this only rea-

"ſon

" ſon ſeems to be nothing. It is the com-
" pariſon which degrades him *."

Many eſtimable authors of the preſent age enjoy but a middling reputation. They make a figure in libraries only, to add in ſome meaſure to the number, and are leſs read than conſulted. The reaſon of the trifling effect which they produce, is the ſuperiority of ſeveral writers who have eſtimated fame at too high a price.

The preſent century has produced men of the greateſt genius of every kind. They have fixed the degree of elevation to which wit can riſe, and every ſpecies of it which does not attain this, falls into obſcurity. To produce a great effect—wit, ſagacity, and erudition muſt now be added to the charms of ſtyle. The profound and enlightened Monteſquieu, who treats of the moſt important objects, would not have acquired ſo great a reputation had not he joined to the intereſt of the ſubject, and

* Buffon, tom. viii.

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the profundity of his thoughts, the moſt poignant manner of expreſſion.

Men of great genius have ſometimes been the dupes of reputations, which, in their youth, they found eſtabliſhed.

" I have read," ſays la Bruyere, " Mal-
" herbe and Theophilus. They were both
" acquainted with nature; with this dif-
" ference, that the firſt, in a full and uni-
" form ſtyle, ſhews at the ſame time what
" is the fineſt, the moſt noble, the ſim-
" pleſt and moſt natural of her works;
" he has given of them both the hiſtory
" and painting. The other, without
" choice or exactitude, in a free and un-
" equal manner, ſometimes charges his
" deſcriptions and dwells upon detail; he
" anatomiſes. At others, he diſſembles or
" exaggerates; he paſſes over reality in
" nature, and makes it a romance.

" Ronsard and Balsac have each in
" his kind good and bad enough to form
" upon

" upon their model great men both in " verſe and proſe."

" I know not," continues he, " if it will " ever be poſſible to introduce into letters " more wit, invention, agreeableneſs and " ſtyle than we find in thoſe of Balzac " and Voiture."

MALHERBE has preſerved his reputation, but not becauſe, as la Bruyere obſerves, he was acquainted with nature. The harmony and juſtneſs of his expreſſions have preſerved this poet to poſterity. Theophilus is not read, and nothing is more oppoſite to nature than the affectation of his thoughts and ſtyle.

The ſtyle of Balzac is noble and harmonious, but too frequently flighty and emphatical.

That of VOITURE is formal, and his thoughts are far fetched; the reputation he enjoyed, and which deceived la Bruyere, can only be attributed to the vicious taſte of

of the age in which he lived, and the ſcarcity of diſtinguiſhed writers.

Who can read without diſguſt the poetry of Saint Evremont? The rank and celebrity of the perſons to whom his productions were addreſſed, undoubtedly contributed to his ſucceſs. The progreſs in morals and politics has covered with obſcurity his diſſertations upon the Greeks and Romans. Saint Evremont had the wit of the times, which reſembles that of ſociety, and has but a momentary ſucceſs. He had no talent for poetry, nor was his wit very extenſive. He was amiable, cheerful, ingenious and gallant; the ſucceſs of the man gave reputation to the author.

Many authors ſucceed in the theatre by happy ſituations, the pomp of ſhew and novelty of ſubject, but are entirely unintereſting when read in the cloſet. Their verſes are either rough or lingering, their thoughts common, and the illuſion only of the ſtage can ſupport their pieces in repreſentation. They believe themſelves

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to be claſſed with Corneille, Racine and Voltaire; whilſt, with reſpect to talent, they bear no more relation to theſe celebrated men than does the ſcene ſhifter.

The very few authors who have the rare talent of writing, who join harmony of ſtyle to force of thought, always ſucceed upon the ſtage, although the œconomy of their pieces may be faulty. Harmony of ſtyle, added to thought and ſentiment, charm the auditor more than ſituation, and conceal all the defects of the piece. The firſt merit of every writer is to intereſt the reader. How few authors of tragedy have this great advantage!

The wit of the ſixteenth century conſiſted in erudition. It ſeems that genius ſtrove to arrive at the point of maturity. Wit ſucceeded erudition. Great talents were afterwards manifeſted, and their luſtre continued almoſt a century. The ſtate of languor, which is the conſequence of great efforts, ſeems to characterize the preſent epocha. Men of genius are replaced by literati;

literati; they reaſon upon works of the preceding century, range them in claſſes, and write upon the art of writing. Many authors are capable of giving leſſons, yet there are but few who can preſent models. The principles of taſte are familiar, and the habitude of judging has quickened general diſcernment. There are more enlightened judges, more well informed readers, and fewer men of talents. Whilſt a man is young, his mind is productive, but when the ſenſes feel the impreſſion of age, he is confined to reaſoning upon the paſt. Such are the ſtages of life, and ſuch ſeems to have been the progreſs of three centuries. This century preſents the image of old age. Impotence, admiration of the paſt, ſelf-love, which is the effect of age, and the inſenſibility of a heart no longer ſuſceptible of impreſſion, and, finally, an attachment to money, ſeem to give the ſexagenary character of the times.

Of the Court.

THERE is a country of which the exterior ſeems gay and animated, where an agreeable and ſonorous language is ſpoken, but which frequently expreſſes what is contrary to the thought, or expreſſes nothing. Its inhabitants all appear to be employed, and have frequently nothing to do. They run until they are out of breath, that they may have no longer to wait. Many go to this country to return from it, ſpeak of it, and impoſe upon others; wit and genius are there unneceſſary and even dangerous. Habitude and an inſtinct, which is directed by vanity and intereſt, are ſufficient to the adventurer to conduct himſelf ably. Patience and aſſiduity are abſolutely neceſſary, and frequently ſupply the deficiency of every other quality. The mind is never diſturbed by ill humour, and diſguſt and marks of diſdain ſlide gently over the ſoul without leaving the

leaſt viſible impreſſion. One man alone, the univerſal center around which all move, attracts general regard. He walks, and every body is in motion; he ſtops, and all are immoveable; he is melancholy, and the air of affliction becomes general; he laughs, and every face beams with cheerfulneſs. This man is worſhipped like a divinity, and taſtes not the pleaſures common to mankind. He is a ſtranger to truth and friendſhip. He can form no idea of his own merit by the free ſuffrages of thoſe who ſurround him. Theſe have greatneſs of ſoul, morals, vices or virtues according to his pleaſure. This country muſt not be loſt ſight of; a few months abſence conſtitutes you a ſtranger. The part to be acted there changes every inſtant; the protector and protected are found in the ſame perſon; he receives vain promiſes, and gives others as vain in the ſame quarter of an hour. It ſeems that no body dies in this country, for every one is inſtantly forgotten and replaced without an appearance of the leaſt change. It is the abode of hope and envy. Whilſt tormented by

by one you are conſoled by the other, which fills your imagination with agreeable chimeras. Death overtakes the inhabitants in the midſt of hopes, which, for twenty years, have been continually deceived in the purſuit of projects whoſe execution would require another life. Thoſe who are unacquainted with the country I ſpeak of believe it to be paradiſe; the inhabitants decry it, yet have not ſufficient reſolution to detach themſelves from its regions.

Of Kings.

KINGS have no friends, the reaſon is, they have no need of them. Affection and attachment appear in the air, attitude and anxiety of every one about their perſon. Of what uſe to them would be friends? To tell them the truth? Men ſpeak it not to their equals; how would they dare ſhew

it to him from whom they have every thing to hope and fear?

Kings in general are reſerved. This is becauſe vanity, the principal cauſe of indiſcretion, can have no empire over them. Suppreſs the deſire of being hearkened to, of appearing well informed, and diſcretion will become a common quality.

Kings, it is ſaid, diſſemble, and preſerve a countenance undiſturbed in the midſt of agitations. The true reaſon of this power over themſelves is, that their ſelf-love is never affected, that they are accuſtomed to aſſume a viſage of courtly repreſentation, and finally, that their fortune is ever aſſured: a battle loſt may give them pain, but does not intereſt their perſonal fortune, and they eaſily find people who prove to them that the advantages gained by the enemy are not conſiderable. They diſſemble without art. By the nature of things, they have little to expreſs, and conſequently little to conceal.

Seneca

Seneca ſays, that a virtuous man ſtruggling with adverſity is a ſight worthy of the Divinity. Another ſpectacle, not leſs ſublime, is a virtuous king combating the ſeductions which are ſtudiouſly multiplied around him; ſhutting his ears againſt the voice of flattery, and inceſſantly diſſipating the obſcurity with which truth is continually enveloped.

Kings had formerly more communication with their ſubjects. The frequency of troubles, and the power and ambition of the great, forced ſovereigns to confer familiarly with prelates, warriors, and magiſtrates, and to manage and careſs ſuch as had moſt credit with the people. It was neceſſary they ſhould aſſure themſelves of the fidelity, courage and attachment of thoſe whom they employed, and whom others might gain over to their party. Engaged by theſe motives to ſtudy men, to know and manage them, kings lived in familiarity with their ſubjects. The reſult was confidence and affection on the part of monarchs, by which great fortunes,

the effects of an intimate communication with the ſovereign, became more common. Hence, favourites and miniſters, at whoſe riches, magnificence and authority we are now ſo much aſtoniſhed.

The power of ſovereigns reſts at preſent upon an immoveable baſis. Numerous armies oppoſe interior troubles as well as ſudden invaſions. There are but few opportunities of diſplaying rare virtues, of exciting the acknowledgments of ſovereigns by diſtinguiſhed ſervices, or of manifeſting great talents, becauſe the ſphere of public affairs is confined. By the ſame reaſons, there are few circumſtances by which a great aſcendency may be acquired over Princes; in the moment of need they have to chooſe, from a conſiderable number of men, thoſe of middling talents, which are ſufficient to the greateſt employs. The familiarity of ſovereigns is not determined by any neceſſity; they find in all thoſe about their perſons fidelity without merit, becauſe the former is never expoſed to a dangerous proof.

Let

Let me be permitted to compare little things with great, that I may explain my idea more clearly. A young man who has miſtreſſes, and frequent calls for money, feels the neceſſity of putting confidence in his valets. In the want he is of diſcreet and active agents, he attaches himſelf to thoſe of his ſervants, in whoſe prudence and fidelity he can beſt confide. The man without paſſions and intrigue is unacquainted with the capacity and talents of his domeſtics; he needs not give them his confidence. Of what uſe are qualities or talents in giving a glaſs of wine or ſtanding behind a carriage? It is the ſame with thoſe who approach ſovereigns, when the ſtate is calm and royal authority well eſtabliſhed.

Poſterity, like ſocieties, ſeems to have its infatuation. There are men who have given the greateſt ſplendor to the age in which they lived, whoſe merits are depreciated according to the opinion of the ſucceeding age, and the ſyſtems which writers, who have an influence upon pub-

lic judgment, form to themſelves. The name of Henry IV. ſeemed for ſome time to be eclipſed by that of Louis XIV. who had intoxicated the court and the nation with his great qualities, and impreſſed all Europe with admiration and fear. The poem of the Henriade recalled public attention to Henry IV. Afterwards, the application of the mind to objects of political œconomy, confined general obſervation in a more particular manner to the adminiſtration of Sully and the reign of his maſter. The ideas of fame and grandeur appeared to be dangerous chimeras, purſued at the expence of blood and the property of the people. The pure and ſimple views of Sully excited admiration, filled the mind with enthuſiaſm, and produced a genial warmth in the heart. Every thing atchieved or projected by the miniſter was conſidered as an honor done to the ſovereign. The people were eager to overturn the ſtatues of Richelieu, who had prepared the reign of Louis XIV. This monarch, ſo admired whilſt living, who ſeemed to have made hoarſe the voice of fame, has been blamed

blamed and depreciated by public opinion; his miniſters have loſt much of the reputation they had acquired. Louvois, in the eyes of moſt people, was but a tyrant; Colbert, a laborious miniſter, whoſe views were falſe, and who by multiplied regulations and prohibitory laws retarded the progreſs of agriculture and commerce, and ſuppreſſed the efforts of induſtry. In the calm of obſervation, I will endeavour to compare Henry IV. and Louis XIV. and this parallel will, perhaps, preſent to the impartial man ſome diſtinguiſhing actions in favour of Louis XIV. How many are there among thoſe who now blame this monarch, who, in his life-time, would have been carried away by admiration, and have made the academies reſound with his praiſes. When we mean to appreciate great men, we muſt conſider all the circumſtances by which they were affected, the reigning ſentiments of their time, the ſeducements which ſurrounded them, and the force of ſubſiſting prejudices, which appear ſo eaſy to be conquered when time has worn them out.

Henry

Henry IV. hardened to fatigue by his education, paſſed, at an early age, the ordeal of adverſity. He felt himſelf obliged to be a great man, or reduced, in ſome meaſure, to a ſtate of ſervitude. The title of king of Navarre muſt not deceive us: this vain title did not prevent his being in the abſolute dependance of the king of France. Henry's court was poor: he was the chief of a party rather than a monarch. Perpetually obliged to combat and negociate, love was the only relaxation he enjoyed from the fatigues of war and the agitation of political intrigue. The dangerous allurements of this paſſion went more than once near to leading him aſtray, and hindering him from turning to advantage the moſt precious inſtants. He had wit and vivacity, was not a ſtranger to literature, and the habitude of negociations had given him a profound political knowledge. The heart of Henry was ſuſceptible at the ſame time that his active ſenſes burned with deſire. He was the more ſenſible of friendſhip as extreme embarraſſments and critical ſituations had taught him all its value,

and

and made him feel the neceſſity of confidence. Henry had ſeen the miſeries of the people, and this afflicting ſcene was ſtill preſent to his imagination after the immenſe elevation of the throne had placed him at a diſtance from it. Habituated to familiarity by the viciſſitudes of an agitated life, obliged when upon the throne even to manage the great and powerful, and inclined by his nature to confidence, he tempered the ſplendor of royalty with the ſweets and amuſement of private life. By his ſimplicity and manner of living, he approached all the claſſes of citizens, with which, before his elevation, he had had more or leſs communication, and by this means inſpired his people with a ſentiment of tenderneſs to which they had long been ſtrangers. He was, like other men, a father, huſband and friend; and, in the midſt of a brilliant court, the interior of his houſehold reſembled that of a private family. Theſe relations with humanity ſeemed to confound the rank of the monoarch with that of his ſubjects, and rendered him more dear to thoſe of whom he

ſeemingly

ſeemingly became the equal. He had weakneſſes; and, in times of diſorder, they preſented the greateſt dangers. He wiſhed to aſſociate his miſtreſs to the throne, without being reſtrained by the perſpective of the inevitable troubles which the illegitimate birth of his children would one day excite. Carried away by the ardour of his deſires, he made a promiſe of marriage to another woman. A faithful, enlightened and laborious miniſter, the companion of his military toils, reſtored his finances to the greateſt order, penetrated the intricate labyrinth of the operations of partizans, boldly combated the avidity of the great, and made the firſt efficacious effort to relieve the people from the oppreſſion under which they had ſo long laboured.—His maſter was twenty times upon the point of diſgracing him. Biron, who had partaken with him of all the dangers of war, became guilty of a crime againſt the ſtate; but this crime was ſo badly concerted, that no great danger was to be feared from it. Henry appeared inclined to pardon him, but required an avowal. What availed it, whether

ther his friend, led aſtray by a frantic ambition, made an avowal or not? Ought a ſtate crime to be treated with all the vain punctilio of a quarrel between a lover and his miſtreſs? Ought the king to have made the life of Biron depend upon an unneceſſary avowal which was ſo difficult to this haughty ſubject?—When years began to accumulate upon his head, Henry was again ſurprized by love. At the age of fifty-eight he became paſſionately fond of the princeſs of Condé. The huſband, with juſt reaſon for jealouſy, quitted the kingdom, and the monarch, in deſpair, ſent to every court in Europe manifeſtos againſt a prince of his blood who had attempted to protect his wife from the diſhonour the king had prepared her.

The auſtere Sully, the grave Jeannin, and Villeroy, grown gay in the political ſervice of his country, met to confer upon the means of giving the princeſs of Condé to his arms. Europe was threatened with the ravages of a war for this new Helen. A frightful and tragical death was the fate of Henry,

Henry, and this terrible event awakened tenderneſs in every heart, and left a long and painful remembrance of his loſs. He lived not to be old, nor lingered upon a bed of ſickneſs; he died at once in full poſſeſſion of all his faculties, and the nation was ſenſibly affected by his death, and grateful for all the good which it was ſuppoſed he would have done.

Such was HENRY IV. a conſummate general and a valiant ſoldier. He was frequently led away by weakneſſes which often proceeded from the ſenſibility of his heart, yet they obſcured the majeſty of the throne. A private man in his own court, ſenſible, cheerful and gay, full of goodneſs and humanity *, he could not ſatisfy his envious and inſatiable courtiers, but he anſwered in ſome meaſure the expectations of his people, and ſeemed, had his life been ſpared, as if he would have ſurpaſſed them.

* *Bonhommie* in the text, which in ſome degree correſponds with the Engliſh expreſſion, *the milk of human kindneſs*. T.

LOUIS

Louis XIV. was born upon the throne. On opening his eyes, he ſaw men proſtrate before his grandeur, and the word majeſty, mixed with gentle leſſons, very ſoon met his ears. Under the vain appearance of a preceptor, the flattery of a courtier, anxious to prepare himſelf for future credit, was artfully introduced. His education was neglected, and perhaps purpoſely retarded. His character and juſtneſs of diſcernment were early predicted. He reſembled a vigorous tree planted in a bad ſoil, and whoſe roots were not watered, but grew up and branched out by means of its vivifying ſap. He had neither thoſe ſallies nor witticiſms which mark the levity of a ſuperficial mind, and which flattering preceptors embelliſh at will, and ſtrive who ſhall repeat moſt. Wiſdom and diſcretion marked his early years. Habitude, familiarity, and the marks of tenderneſs, which eſcaped Mlle. Mancini during a dangerous illneſs with which he was afflicted, diſpoſed his heart to love. He was ſoon paſſionately enamoured of the niece of his miniſter, of a cardinal mayor of the palace. Reſpect for

for his mother, and the conſideration of the diſtance between him and his miſtreſs, gave him ſufficient courage to ſurmount his paſſion. Burning with the love of glory, and capable of buſineſs and continued application, he was enſlaved by the acknowledgments he thought he owed to a miniſter who had governed the helm of ſtate in the midſt of ſtorms;—to the man who had enjoyed all the confidence of his mother—to whom he was attached by a ſpiritual tie *, and who was at the head of his education. He left him in poſſeſſion of the ſovereign power, and was content in privately ſtudying mankind and the great art of reigning. At the death of the miniſter, Louis manifeſted his abilities, applied himſelf to ſtate affairs, was equal to every detail, and conceived the greateſt projects. His confidence was divided between two men whom nature ſeemed to have formed to govern kingdoms. Neither the indefatigable ſpirit of intrigue, the rivality of talents, nor the jealouſy of power could

* Cardinal Mazarine was god-father to Louis XIV.

incline

incline the balance in favour of either of them. The monarch ſeemed to reſemble the Divinity, who contains the elements within the bounds preſcribed.

Louis engaged in war; the neceſſity of the enterprize was, perhaps, exaggerated in his opinion by his love of glory. But his kingdom overflowed with riches, his generals were men of diſtinguiſhed abilities, and he found himſelf poſſeſſed of a degree of power which, for a long time, had been uncommon. Finally, ſurrounded by flatterers, by young courtiers, who breathed nothing but war, and the great wits of the age, who predicted his conqueſts, and, previous to them, compared him to Alexander——In the age of the moſt ardent paſſions, fired with the deſire of acquiring a great name,—of ſhewing his valour,—and poſſeſſing the means of univerſal enterpriſe, who would not, like him, have undertaken every thing?

Let us hear what were the ſentiments and principles of this monarch, as he de-

clared them to two perſons who enjoyed his eſteem *.

" I have always thought that the firſt " quality of a king was firmneſs, and " that he ought never to let his virtue be " ſhaken either by cenſure or praiſe ; that " in order to well govern his dominions, " the happineſs of his people was as the " poleſtar, on which he ought to fix his " attention, regardleſs of tempeſts or con- " trary winds which might continually " agitate his political bark.

" I uſe every effort to procure myſelf " friends as well as ſervants, and although " I confeſs I have been deceived in my " choice of ſome, my heart will ever be " diſpoſed to friendſhip and beneficence, " which are the only pleaſures I leave in " the world.

* Theſe paſſages are taken from a converſation of Louis XIV. before Liſle. Peliſſon made the third perſon.

" The

" The love of glory is certainly the " reigning paſſion of my mind; and as " that which we acquire by our valour is " undoubtedly the moſt eſtimable, it is " that by which I feel myſelf moſt flat- " tered.

" Since I perceive you will receive plea- " ſure in hearing me ſpeak of my own " heart, I will, for the love I bear you, " make that effort, however repugnant it " may be to my feelings to ſpeak of my- " ſelf.

" It is true, I have ever felt pain on " hearing myſelf praiſed, as having all " the virtues of a great king, and parti- " cularly when I have been conſcious of " not poſſeſſing that for which I was " moſt flattered.

" The titles of conqueror and hero, " which are indiſcriminately given to kings " whether they have ever done any thing " to merit them or not, were offenſive to " my courage; and my heart, which is

" really juſt and generous, could not ſuffer " another to make it a compliment of " the fame of which it felt itſelf wor- " thy.

" Nevertheleſs, as there is ſomething " great in ſubduing the paſſions when it " is in our power to ſatisfy them, and " that no monarch but one devoid of re- " ligion and love for his ſubjects, can " undertake a war ſolely to ſatisfy his " ambition, I wiſhed to wait until juſtice " put arms into my hands.

" In other things which I have done " this campaign, and wherein I followed " as much the advice of M. de Turenne as " the dictates of my own judgment, I " thought his abilities, ſupported by my " preſence, were ſufficient to inſure ſuc- " ceſs; I therefore more particularly ap- " plied myſelf to learn under him the art " of war, and to give proofs of courage, " than to the conducting of my plans.

" All the difficulties I have had to en-

" counter

" counter have only ſerved to render my
" courage leſs capable of being ſhaken;
" but being generally known to my army,
" I was afraid leaſt they ſhould intimidate
" the ſoldiers by the idea of ſo great a
" danger: and perceiving that the taking
" of Liſle conſiſted in gaining from the
" beginning ſome advantages over the
" enemies, and in preventing an infinite
" multitude of burgeſſes from being in-
" ured to war by the moſt trifling advan-
" tage over us, I thought nothing but
" my example, my officers and nobility,
" could inſpire my army with an ex-
" traordinary valour capable of aſtoniſh-
" ing the enemy.

" To this effect, I was deſirous that my
" preſence ſhould animate all their actions;
" and that none might eſcape my obſer-
" vation, I paſſed every night at the *bi-*
" *vouac* *, at the head of my ſquadrons,
" and moſt days at the end of my trench,

* An extraordinary watch kept at night for the ſecurity of a camp. T.

" that if the enemies attacked my lines,
" or made a *ſortie*, I might fall upon them
" with my whole attendance.

" It is true that yeſterday being with
" the reſt at the line of circumvallation,
" when the enemies were about to make
" a third ſally, and having ſeen two of
" my ſquadrons quit their ſtation to go
" and charge them, I thought it unfit-
" ting that I ſhould deſire extraordinary
" marks of your courage without giving
" you ſome proofs of my own, on an oc-
" caſion wherein my reputation was ſo
" materially concerned. There is no
" king, be his pretenſions to goodneſs of
" heart ever ſo few, who can ſee ſo many
" brave men ſacrifice their lives in his
" ſervice without taking ſome part in the
" common danger. I was therefore highly
" ſatisfied that your courage and affection
" juſtified my zeal and ardour, and happy
" to command you in a battle which I
" thought would become conſiderable, that
" I might partake with you of the honour

" and

" and have ſuch good witneſſes of my " valour.

" I know that detraction ſpares not " kings more than other men, and al- " though the ſhafts of malice be more " ſecretly directed againſt ſovereigns, their " effects are not leſs generally felt when " they are waded off by the marks of " royalty.

" When a king contents himſelf with " continually hearing his own praiſes, and " when his heart is not more delicate than " his ears, it frequently happens that his " own opinion is the only one which is " favourable to him."

Several of theſe expreſſions, but little known or quoted, manifeſt the character and manner of thinking of this great monarch. I will now finiſh what I have to obſerve relative to his reign and perſon.

He encouraged all the arts, and learned foreigners were naturalized by his benefi-

cence. His campaigns were triumphs, and the moſt magnificent preſents were the recompence of the leaſt marks of friendſhip in princes who ſent ambaſſadors to compliment him. Every mind was filled with extravagant joy, and the name of Louis reſounded throughout Europe; his fame reached the diſtant regions of Perſia and the Indies; there was but one great king, the French monarch. The majeſtic gracefulneſs of his perſon, the nobleneſs of his manners, his converſation, which was always adapted to thoſe to whom he ſpoke, and often ſenſible and pleaſing; his ſumptuous entertainments, and the magnificence of his palace, invited every body to his court, where wit, taſte and politeneſs excluſively reigned *.

Louis

* Father Rapin wrote to the Compte de Buſſy in 1671—"It muſt be a conſolation for you, that it is "not at preſent the faſhion at court to have wit and "virtue." This father Rapin was very ſcrupulous; without conſidering the great talents of every kind which gave luſtre to the reign of Louis XIV. and confining myſelf to the perſons of his court, under what

Louis XIV. in the brilliant entertainments which he gave to the nation, was himſelf an actor, and permitted pleaſantries and alluſions relative to his taſte; theſe would at preſent appear dangerous indiſcretions.—They ſeemed not at the time to correſpond with the haughtineſs of his character, with that majeſty with which he took pleaſure in ſurrounding himſelf.

In the royal ballet of Hercules in love, repreſented in 1662, the following verſes were written for mademoiſelle de Mancini repreſenting a ſtar.

what reign, in what court could he have found more wit? Whom could he have oppoſed to the great Condé, to the duke of Rochefoucault, to madame de Sevigny, to madame de Coulanges, to Henrietta of England, the duke of Nevers, the duke of St. Aignan, the compte of Grammont, the marquis of Vardes, the compte de Guiche—to madame de la Fayette, the cardinal de Retz, madame de Thianges, the abbeſſe de Fontevrault, to madame de Monteſpan, to Peliſſon or Benſerade.

" Ce

" Ce gôut trop délicat
" A votre feu ſi vif et ſi rempli d'éclat,
" Mêle quelque fumée et ſert comme d'obſtacle.
" Les etoiles vos Sœurs vous diront qu'autre fois
" Une étoile a ſuffi pour produire un miracle,
" Et pour faire bien voir du pays à des Rois.

Which may be rendered nearly as follows:

This taſte too delicate,
With your ardent and brilliant fire,
Mixes ſome ſmoak, and ſerves as an obſtacle to its effects.
The ſtars, your ſiſters, will tell you, that formerly
A ſtar was ſufficient to produce a miracle,
And make kings ſee many countries.

The pretenſion which Mlle. Mancini had of marrying Louis XIV. who had loved her to ſuch a degree as to make the queen afraid of her, could not be better announced.

In the ballet of the Birth of Venus, wherein the king danced in the character of a ſhepherd, his partiality for Mlle. de la Valliere is expreſſed in the following verſes. But what is perhaps more extraordinary,

dinary, the diſgrace of the ſuperintendant Fouquet is there attributed to the audacious propoſitions which he made to this lady.

For Mlle. de la Valliere, ſhepherdeſs.

" Ne penſez pas que je veuille en ce jour
" Vous cajoller, ni vous parler d'amour.
" Je ſais qu'il eſt dangereux de le faire
" Et je craindrois plus que votre colere."

Think not I mean at preſent to cajole you, or ſpeak of love; I know it would be dangerous ſo to do, and I ſhould fear ſomething more than your anger.

Louis was ſuſceptible of love, and the choice of his miſtreſſes did honour to his taſte. They were the *delicate* la Valliere, *humble as the violet, aſhamed of being a dutcheſs, a mother and miſtreſs.* Monteſpan, who was ſuperior to moſt women in beauty and elegance of perſon, in gracefulneſs of manners, the livelineſs of her mind, and that ingenious turn of wit which was the appendage of Mortemart.—The beautiful and

and virtuous Maintenon, whoſe mind was of ſo ſuperior an order. When his paſſions were calmed by age, he made her his companion, without dividing with her his throne. It was the ſociety of an eſtimable woman which he wiſhed to inſure to himſelf, and not that of an ambitious one, like Gabrielle d'Eſtrées, who pretended to the crown. No inconvenience could reſult from this alliance; the age of madame de Maintenon prevented her from giving heirs to the throne, which was already well ſupported and protected on every ſide.

Although Louis had the fulleſt confidence in his miniſters, they never governed him, nor did he, on his part, ever ſubject them to unjuſt caprice. Ardently as he loved, he was never diſhonoured by the object of his choice, nor by the empire which love gave over him. He was great in weakneſs ever, and was never carried beyond the bounds of decency. Full of his own greatneſs, and deſirous that nothing ſhould reſiſt him, yet never was he cruel.—Abandoned to voluptuouſ-

voluptuouſneſs, yet never overcome by effeminacy. He had a friendſhip for Lauzun, la Rochefoucault and Villeroy, but was never led by favourites. He was habituated to exceſſive praiſe, yet patient in hearing truth.—He knew how to give luſtre to every body near him, and for a long time inſpired his court and people with a religious love for his perſon. Holding an equal balance between different events, he encouraged talents and the arts without favouring any body, (a rule unobſerved by Richelieu) or deſiring that his own taſte ſhould be the reigning one of the age. Louis was born a monarch, and his amours, converſation and actions never ſuffered him to withdraw himſelf from public attention. He had but little in him of the private man; but majeſty, grandeur, and frequently goodneſs, were conſpicuous in all his actions.

Common and natural pleaſures are neceſſary to kings. Self-love enters into all thoſe of other men, but that of kings is ſatiated from their infancy.

Sovereigns

Sovereigns and the great, ſuffer none but gay and agreeable objects near their perſons, and their repugnance on ſeeing the unfortunate is frequently miſtaken for goodneſs, whilſt their feelings are perſonal, and incline them to avoid the ſight of that which is diſagreeable.

The affliction of the great is often nothing more than anger.

Of Courts and Courtiers.

CUSTOMS and jargon change in every court, but flattery will ever be the determining principle of fortune, and the fear of talents and virtue an obſtacle to the advancement of men of ſuperior merit.

If flattery ceaſed to have the greateſt influence in a court, it might be concluded that government had loſt ſome of its power,

power, that the ſovereign, the miniſters, and the great had leſs influence upon the imagination, and that the bonds of dependence were weakened. The vices and virtues of a government are ſo united, that it is impaired by a diminution of the defects which reſult from its conſtitution.

Courtiers are not the moſt enlightened men in a nation, and yet they are thoſe who decide the moſt quickly upon merit. From the habitude of judging, and their intereſt being ſtrongly excited, they derive a ſuperior nicety of diſcrimination which ſeldom leads them into error; the clearneſs of their perception is extreme, and, from things apparently indifferent, they draw the moſt important concluſions. The jeſt, countenance, and every thing by which a man may be diſcovered, falls under their obſervation; this is not rational but inſtinctive, and on that account more juſt.

A man in the city enjoys a great reputation, to which men of wit even give their ſuffrage.

ſuffrage. He arrives at court, and there fills an important place. A courtier at firſt ſight diſcovers his defects and incapacity, and the celebrated man diſappears for ever.

Courtiers reſemble children, who perceive with ſuch quickneſs and ſubtilty the defects which eſcape the obſervation of perſons of more experience.

Why is the deceit of courtiers ſo much complained of? It is only neceſſary to learn their language and become acquainted with their manners. There is no more perfidy in a court than in a cloyſter, or in a family whoſe intereſts are divided; but it is concealed under leſs vulgar appearances. To miſtake the forms of politeneſs for real ſentiments, is the groſſeſt ignorance. Women ſay, an opera is frightful: Is ſuch an expreſſion to be literally conſtrued? A man ſays, to his equal, to his inferior even, that he is at his ſervice: Are we to conclude from this, that he is ready to obey him. The polite exterior of the court has

has at leaſt the merit of concealing its interior deformity.

Men at court ſeek after power and grandeur, and are drawn towards him who is inveſted with theſe attributes. It is ſelf-love which leads to error in the ardent purſuit of objects; it exaggerates their value to the imagination, and contributes more to deceive than the artifices of others.

The garden of the Thuilleries is unfrequented in winter. In the ſame manner courtiers abandon men in diſgrace. Could the trees, in this garden, make any reaſonable complaint againſt thoſe who ſought not their ſhade when covered with hoar froſt?

At court there are but two ſorts of perſons who produce great effect—princes and miniſters. Men make way for the former, but run to meet the latter. Greatneſs produces reſpect; it is excited by power.

There is no place at court except for the great and the little. Men of middling rank cannot exiſt there. Eminent merit may ſometimes ſhew itſelf—but as a phænomenon and tranſient as a comet.

People at court have not more wit than others, but they are they who know beſt how to do without it. They are accuſtomed from infancy to ſee objects of a certain height, to meaſure the different degrees of ſociety, and to range men in claſſes. Regards and attention form a part of their education, and exerciſe them in this cuſtom. They have a certain facility of expreſſion which is engaging, and different manners of rendering the ſame thing. Hence it comes that their company is more agreeable than that of a man of private ſociety, who, although he may have the advantage in underſtanding, ſees with the prejudices of his ſituation, and expreſſes himſelf with leſs delicacy.

Renown can find no place in a court. Courtiers can ſuffer no advantages which are

are out of the power of favour to confer.

Theſe men are really great philoſophers. No body appreciates human weakneſs better than they do, nor is better acquainted with littleneſs of mind. The ſucceſs of their flattery is the beſt proof of this aſſertion.

Men who think themſelves ambitious are frequently full of nothing but the littleneſſes of vanity. The exhibition of the anti-chamber is ſufficient for moſt of them. The man really ambitious wiſhes to agitate and govern the world.

The moſt flattering dominion is that over mens minds. What is the influence of a miniſter compared with that of the head of a ſect?

Self-love finds its enjoyment in the ſuffrages and approbation of men; but the laſt degree of pride is to enjoy their contempt.

Egotiſm reigns particularly in diſcourſe; perſonality has more influence upon actions. The Egotiſt continually boaſts of himſelf, and for the moſt part ſpeaks in the firſt perſon. The perſonal man artfully ſeeks that which may but ſerve his intereſts and flatter his ſelf-love: the former often ſpeaks of himſelf, and the latter ſtrives to turn every thing to his perſonal advantage.

Character of a Personal Woman.

CHEPHISA is wholly taken up with herſelf: every part of her converſation points to this only centre. She ſometimes appears to depart from it, but inſenſibly returns, and as ſhe is miſtreſs of ſome addreſs, it requires penetration to follow her through all her windings. Her ſole and continued deſire is to produce effect in trifling

trifling as well as important occurrences. She muſt at all events engage every body's attention. Chephiſa has very good eyes, but a ſtrong light incommodes them, and on entering an apartment, ſhe deſires the curtains may be drawn. A high chair is neceſſary to her, and the houſes where ſhe viſits are provided with this particular piece of furniture. She carries bread with her, and the water ſhe drinks is poured out of a caſe bottle: it is perhaps Seine water; her chair, her bread and water, are not thoſe common to every body. Her ſervant is a *heiduc*, a huſſar, or a negro; ſhe will be diſtinguiſhed—the converſation is always led by Chephiſa. She ſpeaks to every body apart; and if a man in place, or a miniſter, be in the company, ſhe takes care to get hold of him. She leads him aſide, and never fails to find a ſubject upon which ſhe ſpeaks to him in a low tone of voice. Chephiſa ſuffers with impatience the praiſes of others; every eulogium ſhe hears ſeems to be a theft committed upon herſelf, and when ſhe ſpeaks in favour of any perſon, it is not ſo much to do juſ-

tice to merit as that her diſcernment may be admired. If ſhe ſpeaks of a fine action, it is to ſhew her ſenſibility and engage attention. If ſhe be warm in her commendations, it is that they may the ſooner be ended. Her birth, her huſband, children and taſte are the eternal topics of her converſation. Speak of China, and with much addreſs you will be brought back into her cloſet, to her lap dog, or to ſomething which relates to herſelf. You cannot eſcape, you muſt think of Chephiſa. There is not any body ſhe really loves; her huſband, children, and all thoſe who ſeem dear to her ſhe conſiders no more than as ſo many poſſeſſions and dependances. She has no taſte for arts; for any thing which imitates nature, nor for nature herſelf; none of theſe ſpeak to her of her own perſon. All her attachments are formed upon motives of perſonal ability. She ſeems to love Doris, becauſe he is convenient to her at a ſupper once a week at her houſe; Criton, becauſe he dangles after her in a public walk; Dorimon, becauſe he is a man *a la mode*, and figures at the

the ſuppers ſhe gives; Artemenes, becauſe he has a great place, and his friendſhip gives conſideration; Damon, becauſe he knows a few ſtories, which when ſhe pleaſes, ſhe makes him relate, and has him continually at her command; Caliſthenes, becauſe he is a prince, and his company does her honour—he is like a luſtre ſuſpended in the middle of her drawing room. Finally, all thoſe who know and viſit Chephiſa, have each their part to act, or ſome office to fill, either for her amuſement or intereſt. She has no ſentiment, and would be glad the univerſe were a mirror wherein her perſon might be inceſſantly reflected.

Of Politeness.

THE politeneſs of old men of faſhion, is boaſted of in every reign and century, and young men are reproached with a want of good breeding. This is neither the fault of the preſent age nor generation, but of youth in general. Men of riper years, or advanced in life, are leſs carried away by their paſſions and inclinations. Experience has proved to them the neceſſity of regards and attentions; more accuſtomed to conſtraint, and more attached to their intereſt, their attention is ſo marked as not to wound ſelf-love, and they are anxious to obtain univerſal ſuffrage. The courtier of fifty years of age, whoſe politeneſs is quoted as an example, was blamed in his youth for a levity of manners, his airs of contempt, and his ignorance or forgetfulneſs of polite attention.

Extreme

Extreme vivacity or indolence prevents a man from being polite. Perſons of a very lively diſpoſition, are led away by their ardor, and are frequently wanting in attention to others; the idle are really ſo from an unwillingneſs to give themſelves trouble.

Men are always the dupes of politeneſs, and of thoſe expreſſions which have the leaſt value; their ſelf-love is diſpoſed to turn every thing indiſcriminately to their own advantage.

Several perſons aſſembled produce a diſagreeable odour; if obliged to live together, they agree to uſe ſtrong perfumes. This is a part of politeneſs.

Of the Principles of Montesquieu upon Governments.

IT is in vain that ſeveral authors have exclaimed againſt the principles of Monteſquieu upon Governments. The more they are reflected upon the greater knowledge and depth of penetration they are found to contain.

Fear, and the abſence of the ſentiment of honour, particularly characterize deſpotic ſtates. In China, the emperor orders the baſtinade to be given to a miniſter or a mandarin *; and afterwards theſe perſons continue in their employments without thinking themſelves diſhonoured or degraded. They are ſcholars which re-

* A name given to the magiſtrates and governors of provinces in China, who are choſen out of the moſt learned men, and whoſe government is always at a great diſtance from the place of their birth. T.

turn

turn to their places after having been whipped.

VOLTAIRE has criticiſed the principles of three governments eſtabliſhed in l'Eſprit des Loix.

"Virtue," ſays he, "is in every country the fruit of education and character; "it is ſaid in l'Eſprit des Loix that more "virtues are neceſſary in a republic. In "one ſenſe the contrary is the caſe; more "virtue is neceſſary in a court to reſiſt ſo "many ſeductions." He afterwards quotes the duke of Montauzier.

It is evident that Voltaire did not underſtand the principle of Monteſquieu, and that he has confounded the poſſible exiſtence of virtue in a monarchy, with the virtue which, according to Monteſquieu, forms the eſſence of a republic. Virtue has more difficulties to conquer, and the virtuous man more merit in a monarchy, by reaſon that virtue is not there the determining principle, and that much force

force is neceſſary to combat the general diſpoſition. Voltaire underſtood the word virtue in its ordinary acceptation, and did not conſider it in its relation to a republican government. Virtue, in this ſenſe, is the love of public weal.

Of Republics and Monarchies.

THE hiſtory of a republic is moſt intereſting to read, but a monarchy is preferable to live in; every thing is quiet there and proceeds without agitation. Such is the harmony of celeſtial bodies, in which the impulſion of movement is unfelt.

A republican government ſeems to be proper for the beginning of manhood when movement and agitation pleaſe more than tranquillity. A monarchical government is fit

fit for men of riper years, who give the preference to peace and repoſe.

A well compoſed monarchy is the conſtitution which approaches neareſt perfection: it is a middle ſtate between republican convulſion and the ſinking of humanity under deſpotiſm.

The moſt eſtimable principle which can be eſtabliſhed in a monarchy is the love of fame and honour; and, on the other hand, the love of theſe is a principle of conception, becauſe it attaches a greater conſideration to the opinion of others than to the real goodneſs of actions.

In monarchies, the fear of pains, and the deſire of rewards, are ſufficient to form faithful ſubjects.

In republics, it is neceſſary to be attached to the public welfare.

There is ſcarcely any point of elevation in monarchies of which thoſe who are ſucceſsful

ſucceſsful dare make known the means; in republics preferment is openly obtained.

In monarchies the man in place is frequently enervated by the neceſſity of managing certain perſons; in republics he gathers ſtrength by oppoſitions and obſtacles, as a gladiator by combats.

In republics men ſucceed by the qualities they poſſeſs; in monarchies, not unfrequently, by thoſe of which they are devoid.

In monarchies, characters loſe their energy by imitation; in republics, they are often carried to extremes by an unbounded liberty of action.

In republics, men are ſacrificed to public good; in monarchies, this is ſometimes ſacrificed to men.

Revolutions in monarchies may be ſudden;

den; in republics, they are the effect of long agitation.

In monarchies, the ſymptoms of evil are hid from public view. Stupefaction ſhuts the eyes of a weak government, and it may be upon the brink of ruin without ſo much as ſuſpecting danger; in republics, every thing is open to diſcovery, every thing is foreſeen.

In republics, the militia is really a national force, and enjoys more conſideration than a regular army; in monarchies, regular troops have the firſt conſideration, and the militia falls among the laſt claſs of the people.

In republics, a career is open to talents, and theſe governments have in them vigour and principles of execution which determine ſucceſs. Men early ſucceed to great employments, becauſe, in the general movement, every thing gives way to force.

In

In republics, every one finds an opening and exercise for his faculties; in monarchies, a man who has energy has frequently no other resource than pleasure.

In monarchies, the fear of ridicule has an influence over the mind and produces a fashionable servitude, which is weakening and corruptive; there is more taste in conversation and writings, more politeness in manners; in republics, there is more originality, more candour in conversation and simplicity in manners.

In republics, dependance is more upon the laws than upon persons, the security in which the subject feels himself renders particular attention to certain persons useless;—there is more equality among the citizens and greater liberty of mind. For all these reasons, politeness, which is but an imitation of the social virtues, must be less common in this kind of government.

In

In courts there is an almoſt infinite gradation of ranks and perſons. From claſs to claſs they act upon one another, and an unknown, yet deciſive power, may be found in the loweſt order. From this neceſſity of attention to every body comes politeneſs. Hence that fear of offending, which keeps the mind continually on its guard;—that perpetual deſire to place which diſpoſes men to make advances, to flatter and careſs. Politeneſs in courts is a characteriſtic and an indiſpenſible quality. It is the ſupplement of virtues which a man does not poſſeſs.

The language of a republican country muſt neceſſarily be energetic; that of a monarchy, full of turns of expreſſion which weaken the real meaning of things.

Friendſhip reigns in republics; men there ſtrive to claſs themſelves; they have great intereſts to take care of, which require fidelity and ſecreſy; they love the ſame thing in common, and friendſhip is

created as well as fortified by the ſpirit of party.

In republics, ſociety is naturally more general, and aſſemblies are more numerous; the ſame intereſt animates every mind, and the liberty of thinking is greater; in monarchies, there are more particular and circumſcribed ſocieties; the intereſt of each of theſe, as well as that of individuals, is more attended to than the intereſt of the community at large, and fidelity and diſcretion are uſeleſs.

In a republic, the more the eſſential ſprings of the conſtitution are bent, and the greater the movement and agitation, the nearer the government is to its perfection.

In a monarchy, on the contrary, nothing muſt be carried to an extreme; every thing muſt be balanced in an equal movement. The force of oppoſition muſt have a limitted degree of extenſion, and authority

rity a moderated action. An equilibrium is the moſt perfect ſtate of a monarchy.

The idea of virtue is become ſo effaced that ſcarcely do we hear the name of it pronounced. The uſual expreſſion now is, an honeſt man, which contains but negative qualities; or ſometimes qualities are mentioned, ſuch as bravery, fidelity, &c. but a collective word which expreſſes them all is ſeldom made uſe of; in republics, enumerations are unneceſſary. The love of public weal comprehends every thing—it is virtue itſelf.

Amiability is, every thing conſidered, the ſafeſt and moſt advantageous quality to carry into ſociety. It is too dangerous to let any thing appear which characterizes the great man.

In monarchies, the great art of obtaining a high employment frequently conſiſts in ſtifling impatience.

In republics, faults ought to be perſonal,

and not reflect upon families, becauſe every one is equally ſubject to the laws.

In monarchies, the deſire of diſtinctions eſſential to this conſtitution, makes it honourable to be above the laws, and puniſhments ſeem to prove nothing more than that the family upon any part of which they are inflicted, enjoys but little conſideration. This manner of judging and being effected, appears in ſome meaſure to render crimes and puniſhments common to a whole family, which they ſeem to reduce to the loweſt claſs.

If a man of mediocrity, who is in place, has conſiderable intereſt, he propoſes perſons and determines the choice of them. In this caſe, moſt public employments are held for the next twenty-five years by men of mediocrity.

In republics, there is in ſome meaſure a competition for great employments; in monarchies,

monarchies, they are arbitrarily diſtributed.

In the firſt of theſe governments men of ſuperior abilities are neceſſarily called up to great places; in others, they are frequently preferred, for no other reaſon than that their ſuperiority has not been diſcovered, or that their talents have been ſeconded by intrigue.

Of War.

IN time of peace, men of ſlender abilities make a great figure. Minute attention to the diſcipline of troops, and application to petty details, are the only means whereby a man can diſtinguiſh himſelf; and perſons of middling talents, joined to activity, are, above all others, moſt likely to ſucceed in this way.

War is one of the ſcourges of humanity, and yet it is by war that nations preſerve their virtues and the character which is particular to them. Man is naturally and ſtrongly diſpoſed to motion. It is by action that his qualities are developed, and by which he compares himſelf with others, and is well or ill in his own eſtimation. One nation preſerves and ſtrengthens its attachment to its manners and conſtitution by its quarrels with another nation, its rival in power and commerce.

A long peace familiarizes people to each other. Commerce pulls down every barrier and gives a politeneſs to manners which reduces every one to the ſame level. National character is weakened, the idea of glory forgotten, and virtue becomes feeble; for public virtue is the love of public weal. A native is not then more dear than a ſtranger: every man is meaſured by the advantages ariſing from a commercial intercourſe with him.

Virtuous

Virtuous times, with different nations, have ever been the times of war; and the epochas when their antipathies were ſuch as the greateſt deſire of each was to deſtroy the other. The obſtinate hatred of the Romans againſt the Carthaginians; that of the French, at certain periods, againſt the Spaniards, leave no doubt of the degree of patriotiſm which was its cauſe and effect.

Commerce reconciles nations; they all, in the end, become enlightened by the ſciences; and the mental communication theſe eſtabliſh between men tends to deſtroy national prejudices. Commercial and thinking men have the univerſe for their country.

In this ſtate of things, there are naturally fewer great virtues, but theſe are leſs neceſſary. The energy of every poliſhed and enlightened nation becomes equally diminiſhed. It then ſeems unneceſſary that the citizen ſhould be animated by a noble patriotic enthuſiaſm: all that is required of him is morals and ſocial virtues,

by which the place of public virtue is ſupplied.

Great virtues exiſt in little ſtates only; they are incompatible with riches, and metals conſtantly become the portion of ſtates which aggrandize themſelves.

If war with natural enemies produces virtues, civil wars give birth to them in greater number, and require more rare qualities. In the former, valour and military talents are ſufficient to obtain ſucceſs; but, in time of civil diſſenſion, the valour which braves danger muſt be added to the intrepidity which braves puniſhments; to talents for war muſt be joined the wiſdom and experience of a ſtateſman.

The ſuperiority of paſt generations over the preſent was, in a great meaſure, the effect of their perpetual agitation. It is to this cauſe that the virtues of Henry de Guiſe, of the admiral de Coligny

Coligny and thoſe of de l'Hopital are to be attributed: Henry IV. was formed by like circumſtances. In profound peace, his ardent deſire of pleaſures would have enervated his mind, and he would not have been either ſo great or good a king, had he not been rouſed to activity by war and public affairs—had not he himſelf felt the preſſure of want, or had not the feelings of his heart been a thouſand times awakened by the cries of the miſery of his people.

Of Vanity and Self-love.

IN the number of extravagant ideas, with which the heads of madmen are filled, it ſeldom happens that they have one which inclines them to believe they are in a ſubordinate ſtate. Viſit all the mad-houſes and you will find the inſane inhabitants either princes, kings, emperors, or gods. If they be enamoured, it is with a princeſs or a queen. In general they ſpeak of nothing but grandeur; a ſenſible proof that vanity, above every thing, reigns in the human mind.

There are two things which comic poets in their deſcriptions, and moraliſts in their characters, can never exaggerate; theſe are vanity and avarice.

Vanity governs mankind, and for this reaſon the great enjoy a diſtinguiſhed advantage, that of flattering their inferiors by

by admitting them to their preſence and familiarity. The artiſt, the phyſician and ſurgeon, as well paid by a commoner, fly in preference, in obedience to their commands; they are pleaſed in approaching perſons whom chance has placed ſo far above them, and in ſeeing what paſſes in their circles, that they may ſpeak of it to their family and friends; and this acceſs adds to their emoluments.

A great man who has not his inferiors at command, has but a ſhallow capacity, conſidering their inclination to admire men in elevated ſtations, and the impreſſion which their moſt trifling expreſſions make upon them.

Self-love is the ſource of pride and vanity; but I am of opinion that it is poſſible to diſtinguiſh theſe affections; they have the ſame principle and yet are differently modified. Self-love is flattered by homage; the want of this has leſs effect upon pride, but vanity publiſhes it to all the world.

Much

Much has been ſaid of the pride and vanity of the comte de Buſſy, and all that has been quoted from him is perhaps not ſo ſtriking as the following paſſage from one of his letters.

He there ſpeaks of his memoirs, and thus expreſſes himſelf:

"The work is a great one, and whole "years of conſideration will ſcarcely be "ſufficient to examine it well." Theſe famous memoirs are very moderate performances and entirely unintereſting.

Too much ſelf-love is a great weakneſs, and at the ſame time deceitful to a high degree; a man, who has it to exceſs, depends upon every body about him.

We are inſuſceptible of virtue, unleſs there be ſomething we value more than life.

The man who can be made to tremble, he who is eaſily corrupted, are deſpiſed, becauſe

becauſe the bounds of their virtue and courage are known as well as the motives which make them obedient and dependant.

The extreme love of life diſturbs the faculties to ſuch a degree as to deſtroy the means of preſerving it. Extreme ſelf-love diſconcerts a man ſo as to prevent him from profiting by the advantages which he poſſeſſes, and may in the end reduce a man of wit to the ſtate of a fool.

Self-love inſpires us with the deſire of mixing with the world, and of living with perſons of an elevated rank. Again, it withdraws us from the great world that we may not be eclipſed by ſuperiority. It makes us prefer ſocieties in which we are ſure to hold the firſt rank or at leaſt to be diſtinguiſhed.

CRITON avoids the world, he is in ſome meaſure ſavage, he is pleaſed and ſatisfied with the ſociety of a few friends, but numerous circles are inſupportable to him; he

he there appears aukward and embarraſſed, and ſeems to have loſt the uſe of his ſenſes. From this it may perhaps be concluded, that Criton is timid and difficult in the choice of his ſociety; but the ſelf-love of Criton is extreme, and he has the moſt violent inclination to produce effect. For this reaſon only it is that he avoids aſſemblies, in which he would not be diſtinguiſhed, and that he is not happy except in ſmall circles where he excites and engages attention. In theſe, confidence gives the neceſſary ſcope to his wit.

Vanity is not confined to the honours of this world, it pretends to extend them to another life *.

* Mademoiſelle de Montpenſier relates, in her Memoirs, that madame hurt herſelf, and was delivered of a daughter which had been dead ten or twelve days, and was almoſt rotten; ſhe adds, that madame de Thianges, told the vicar, who was uncertain whether the child was in a ſtate to be baptized or not, to look to himſelf, that baptiſm was never refuſed to children of that quality.

It is not always moſt flattered by the real advantages of a great place; a little prerogative or frivolous diſtinction is frequently moſt valuable in the eyes of vanity; men dare not publicly avow the conſideration they attach to theſe, and even within themſelves, it is with difficulty they reflect upon it.

Let us analize the effects reſulting from the poſſeſſion of a great place, of an important employment, or of the blue, red, green, or yellow ribbon, the deſired objects of many men who paſs their lives in hopes and fears. Let him who poſſeſſes them examine himſelf; let him be honeſt and he will ſay, Men approach me with an humble and reſpectful air; in paſſing the crowd I ſee them make way, and the people and valets haſtily take off their hats in my preſence; when I enter a circle, reverences are more inclined for me than for others, and I am liſtened to with attention; the ladies ſmile upon me, and are ſolicitous to ſpeak to me in private. I am ſpoken of in the gazettes and journals, and my

my name is from time to time read in them by the idlers of Peterſburgh and Vienna. My antichamber is filled with perſons, whom the deſire of fortune, or the preſſure of neceſſity, keeps in my dependance; their number and ſolicitations aſſure me of my influence. Subalterns, and my ſervants, call me *Monſeigneur*. A man would ſooner confeſs a bad action than avow the extreme conſideration he has for theſe vain diſtinctions, which he ſeemingly deſpiſes. But I refer to thoſe by whom they are enjoyed, and their attentive obſervers.

The deſire of producing ſenſible effects, and of gaining attention, purſues men in the moſt trifling circumſtances of life; he who gives a dinner is the centre of thoſe who are at his table; his gueſts are obliged to pay him attention, and the pleaſure of being moſt diſtinguiſhed is what he ſeeks after in aſſembling them. Few people have reaſon and philoſophy enough patiently to hear it ſaid, that their cook is but an indifferent one, that their wine is not excellent, or that a regoût is

not

not good; ſelf-love makes us intereſted in behalf of every perſon and thing in our poſſeſſion or dependance.

What powerful attraction does Dorſan find in the employment he holds? It conſiſts, you will ſay, in his natural inclination for detail and public affairs. No. The conſiderable ſalary attached to it? Little leſs. He is himſelf ignorant of the motive which makes it ſo precious to him: —I will tell you what it is. The connection which his employment gives him, and the forced auditors who are obliged to liſten to every thing he ſays. Dorſan relates, expatiates and wearies, By the King's Authority.

It is by reaſon of our ſelf-love that we ſupport with pain the ſlighteſt pleaſantry, and, on the contrary, that certain perſons ſuffer themſelves to be its devoted objects. It is abſolutely neceſſary, to their ſatisfaction, that they ſhould engage the attention of others, and they prefer being the objects of raillery than to being

confounded with the insignificant and unknown.

Few people recite a conversation with a king or a great minister in the same tone of voice and manner of expression in which it passed. They change something without a purpose or any previous arrangement. They substitute expressions apparently equivalent, and the jest, and tone of voice in which they relate what passed gives another meaning to the whole. All these reserves and alterations are ever in favour of self-love which watches within us, and acts in some measure without our participation, so sudden and enlightened is its inspiration.

One man has need of restraint, another of encouragement. Hence it comes that the same man is known under different aspects, and that he succeeds in one society and is insupportable in another. Each of these men appear to advantage when circumstances are such as to encourage or restrain him.

A general

A general rule is, that he in whom vanity is predominant has no ſentiment for excellency and truth, and is incapable of affection.

Curioſity and indiſcretion are inſeparable companions, and falſehood is the child of vanity.

Man, in a natural ſtate, knows not the wants of ſelf-love. As ſoon as he lives in ſociety, he feels the deſire of being diſtinguiſhed and attended to by others. To be unknown is a torment to him, and he loſes the ſentiment of real enjoyments to create himſelf the pleaſures of ſelf-love and vanity. Leſs concerned about being happy than to appear ſo, he purchaſes places, performs the duties of office, and makes himſelf connections that he may act upon others and others upon himſelf. If by dignities he cannot excite attention, he ſtrives to produce effect by a diſplay of his riches, the magnificence of his houſe, the taſte and coſtlineſs of

the furniture which it contains, and by the new diviſions of his gardens. It is not for his own pleaſure that a rich man gives great ſuppers, that another aſſembles half the town at his balls, or has pictures by eminent maſters, or a cloſet of natural hiſtory; it is to add to his conſequence. This houſe, theſe gardens, form for the proprietor a ſituation in the world; he poſſeſſes them as he would perform the functions of a place at court, or thoſe of a great employment in the city.

CHARACTER OF A MAN WHO POSSESSES A FINE HOUSE.

THE houſe of Arſura coſt him half his fortune, and muſt be allowed to be a pretty ſhop, almoſt equal to the *little Dunkirk* *. Every thing is placed with ſymmetry and expoſed to view ſo as to have effect. Three volumes, which are upon a bureau, are changed from time to time, but always figure in the ſame place; the paper and ſtandiſh are immovable. What admirable order! In examining ſo agreeable an habitation, I am afraid of deranging ſomething, and the maſter of the houſe undoubtedly feels the ſame embarraſſment. Where does he keep himſelf? In ſome diſtant corner? For I perceive no traces of motion, nothing which proves the houſe to be inhabited. The boards are ſo ſlippery that it is difficult

* A famous ſhop in Paris.

to ſtand upon them. Arſura is not often at home, and his wife and darling ſon have no habitation there. Ah! I know the reaſon: he is afraid of incommoding the public. This is a great ſelf-denial. But what pleaſure does he receive when at court or in the city—he is ſent to for tickets of admiſſion. He goes to give a look at his houſe and gardens to ſee if every thing be in its place; but his pleaſures are ſometimes diſturbed. He was one day informed that a great lady had been to ſee his houſe, and that the moſs which covered a part of the ruins, ſo expenſive to keep in order, was waſhed away by the rain. He was told the workmen had left their tools in his antique temple, and that the river was almoſt dry from the negligence of the waterman. Redouble your cares, Arſura, if you wiſh to preſerve your conſequence. Watch your houſekeeper that you may aſſure yourſelf ſhe is careful to ſhew every thing to the beſt advantage, and to direct the attention of the curious to that which is the moſt ſingular,

gular. One neglect is ſufficient to ruin you with the public. The young girls whom you pay to figure in different attitudes at the end of the meadow are ſometimes abſent. Above all, take care that the old man, his wife and children, whoſe employment is to feign a ruſtic family in a thatched cabin, fail not to be at their poſt at the arrival of a brilliant company. Never ſell your houſe, Arſura, however expenſive it may be to you; you would in that caſe be a miniſter out of place. You ſmile, Arſura, in ſeeing children make baby-houſes. Your occupations are not different from theirs, and are ſtill more vain. Theſe employ themſelves for amuſement, and you to be talked of.

Irremediable inconvenience, which mortifies ſelf-love, is the moſt afflicting.

That which makes others withdraw themſelves from our ſociety, is the moſt diſagreeable to be reproached with. A man may pardon the greateſt injury, but

will he forgive another who reproaches him with being tireſome?

Of Birth.

IF a man of an ancient family, although but little known, makes a brilliant and rapid fortune, all his natural and acquired advantages become ſo many motives of the greateſt envy. His birth is criticiſed and depreciated, and, for a century, the public, perhaps, refuſe to do juſtice to his anceſtors *.

* Birth is more than ever neceſſary in France, but as ancientneſs alone is ſufficient to enjoy all the advantages to be expected from it, a high and illuſtrious birth was never more indifferent. When a man can date his nobility from 1400, when he can prove that he deſcends from a long ſucceſſion of lords of manors, he thinks himſelf equal to the Rieux, the Montmorencies, the Rohans, &c. &c.

The

The firſt care of thoſe who become rich is to forge a genealogy; this proves with what impatience men bear being ranked in an inferior claſs, and excluded from certain honours. The more fortune is conſiderable the more this excluſion is ſenſible.

The wiſeſt and moſt enlightened men have not always been exempt from the pride of birth. Turenne had this weakneſs to the laſt degree.

The prejudice of birth is one of thoſe the moſt predominant in the minds of men of every claſs and country. The caſts of the Indians do not aſſociate with their inferiors, and there are ſeveral grooms to nabobs who would think themſelves diſhonoured by eating with their maſters. Raymond, who ſells cloth, and whom you look upon with the ſame conſideration as you do the draper whoſe ſhop is next to his, has quite another opinion of himſelf. His father was member of a certain company, and you cannot imagine the difference there

there is between him and his neighbour.

There are three advantages which, when they are in the higheſt degree, give the greateſt conſideration: elevated rank, ſuperior underſtanding (acknowledged to be ſuch) and an immenſe fortune. Grandeur, fame, and power, have nearly the ſame effects. Voltaire, and the poſſeſſor of a million, are diſtinguiſhed beings in ſociety: no conſideration is refuſed them. It is in vain that men who have amaſſed immenſed treaſures are laughed at behind their backs, or that the baſeneſs of their origin is treated contumelioufly; miniſters have need of ſuch perſons to diſengage the ſtate from its embarraſſments; and, the great, to reeſtabliſh their affairs. They command reſpect from the moſt haughty lord, when he recollects that their ſignature can procure him an agreeable exiſtence, or relieve him from preſſing exigencies.

A man of mean or obſcure birth thinks not

not of being reſpected on account of his origin, which is known to every body; but let one of his beſt friends, to ſave him from ridicule, be obliged to ſpeak to him upon the ſubject and he will not know how to treat it with ſufficient delicacy.

Men ſometimes boaſt of the obſcurity of their birth to increaſe the merit by which they removed this obſtacle; but they never avow mediocrity, becauſe they flatter themſelves this may create illuſion.

The advantage of high birth chiefly conſiſts in making merit leſs neceſſary.

The moſt modeſt perſon in appearance, upon the nobility of his family, and who ſeems to attach to it the leaſt conſideration, artfully conceals the pride with which it inſpires him. Ten years intimacy with him are ſcarcely ſufficient to diſcover it; but ſooner or later the moment arrives when he, who ſeemed ſatisfied

fied with equality, reclaims all his rights and awakens his vanity.

Nobility, accompanied by misery, is a ticket in the state lottery. Circumstances fall out so as to elevate a man who has this advantage to the highest employments, to which, without it, he could never have pretended. Mediocrity even in this case is infinitely valuable.

He who continually boasts of his birth and importunes others with it, persuades them in the end to give it more consideration than it deserves. Many ancient and illustrious families, but not more so than a hundred others, owe all the opinion of their splendor, and of their superiority over other families, to the ridiculous vanity of one of their chiefs.

He who consents to devote himself to thirty years ridicule, sometimes procures real advantages to his posterity.

Argentes

Argentes is born a commoner: his father becomes a gentleman the firſt of his name. Argentes calls himſelf marquis, and is laughed at in the world. He perſiſts in ſpite of raillery: ten years paſs, and people become accuſtomed to his title. He muſt be called marquis under pain of quarrelling with him, and becauſe people are familiarized to hearing the title added to his name. Argentes marries a woman of quality without fortune; he becomes the relation of people who deſpiſe him, but with whom he ſigns a contract of marriage, and it is not neceſſary to aſk if he goes regularly to family aſſemblies. In vain does his wife deſpiſe him, her eſcutcheon is united to his: this is ſufficient; he makes one more ſtep in the career of vanity, and puts his name upon the door. Pleaſantries are renewed, and he patiently ſuffers them. Finally, the public are accuſtomed to the hotel of Argentes, becauſe in fact his name is written upon it. He dies, and his ſon has quiet poſſeſſion of the title of marquis and of the inſcription upon the houſe. A generation is paſt,

the

the ridicule is forgotten, and all the world knows of the matter is, that the name is not ancient.

A modeſt man, who has four more generations of nobility, dares not take a title; he has a porter only, his liveries are of an obſcure colour, and his ſervants humbly ſay, *to the houſe* *. He appears as a common citizen, whilſt others owe to their impudence alone their being claſſed in a more advantageous manner.

There is frequently much injuſtice about birth. People of the court know no medium. They call a man who has two hundred years of nobility, a commoner, becauſe his anceſtors held no great em-

* Alluding to footmen in Paris, who, on opening the coach-door for their miſtreſs, have received her orders where to conduct her, and who in giving them to the coachman, if the lady has deſired to be driven home, ſay, *à l'hotel*, which ſometimes means a magnificent manſion, at others, a ſecond or third ſtory in a lodging-houſe.

ployment,

ployment, or they filled honourable places in the magiſtracy.

For four hundred years has the family of Adramont uninterruptedly inhabited a little caſtle, and his anceſtors have married the daughters of lords of manors; none of them ever roſe above the rank of captain, none ever figured in hiſtory, or diſtinguiſhed himſelf either in the church or in a political career, and their names, known in the neighbourhood of the caſtle, are unknown to the reſt of the kingdom. Adramont continually boaſts of the antiquity of his family, and ſpeaks with ſatisfaction of the recent origin of houſes become illuſtrious by great ſervices and the higheſt dignities. He ſays, *a man of my rank, a man like me*; and meaning the moſt bitter reproach to a man whoſe anceſtors have filled the firſt places in the law; know, ſays Adramont to him, that no LORD CHANCELLOR was ever in my family.

In ſome meaſure, none but men of middling

middling rank are capable of being dishonoured. Obscure names, when they become famous by crimes or scandal, call nothing to recollection but the event which covered them with shame. They are like trees which are judged of by the only fruit they have born. Illustrious names, on the contrary, cover by their splendor, or hide by their renown, the crimes and scandalous faults which appear so many unfortunate exceptions in a family known by great services, eminent dignities, and distinguished employments. It is thus on reflection that a principle of reason is found in the blindest prejudices.

Of Character.

THE qualities of which character is compoſed, are like colours which are entirely changed by mixture. The mixture and the reſult require the moſt ſubtle penetration.

To know well the character of a man, it is neceſſary not only to be acquainted with his inclinations, his qualities and defects, but to fix their different degrees. By theſe means, his conduct, in a given circumſtance, may be aſſigned almoſt with certainty.

Ariſtes is choleric, proud, voluptuous, ſelf-intereſted, exceptious and idle. His good qualities, his defects and ſentiments, according to their different degrees of force, will govern him on different occaſions. Think him not incoherent if he neglects his intereſt: his heart is more

ſuſceptible than his mind is intereſted. If ſenſibility does not incline him to relieve the diſtreſſed, who may have moved his compaſſion, be not ſurpriſed at it: the conſequences of his actions muſt be public, and moreover, he is more idle than compaſſionate.

Ergaſtes has buſineſs to tranſact: he concludes it ſpeedily, and makes ſacrifices which he might have avoided. He purchaſes ſomething conſiderable, and pays the firſt price he was aſked for it. Ergaſtes is looked upon as a noble minded and generous man;—by no means—he is idle and impatient.

I heard two men ſpeaking of a third, one of them ſaid, Valerius kills himſelf by application to buſineſs: he paſſes days and nights in his office. The other laughed, and could ſcarcely recover from ſurprize. Valerius, according to him, is one of the moſt idle and diſſipated of men: whom ſhall I believe? Both.—They are both right. Valerius is a man of habitude: what

what he does to-night he will do to-morrow morning. If circumſtances oblige him to apply to buſineſs for two days, he will hold to it ſix months without intermiſſion: if other circumſtances throw him for a moment into diſſipation, he will wallow in it another ſix months.

A proportionate mixture of oppoſite qualities, from great characters, make men attain the end they propoſe. Ardour and patience are neceſſary to advance in the painful road of fortune. That man is happy, who, having but one of theſe qualities, finds himſelf in circumſtances which require not them both; ardour was neceſſary—this he poſſeſſes. Had patience been required, he would have miſſed his object.

Perſons diſtinguiſhed by the elevation of their minds, or the force of character, are thoſe who, perhaps, are the moſt eaſily known, becauſe in general they have a predominant quality by which

every thing is explained to ſuch as have the art of diſtinguiſhing.

Men are unjuſtly reproached with actions or ſentiments contrary to thoſe which they have previouſly done or expreſſed. They are looked upon as falſe, whereas they are only changed. They were carried away by the force of ſentiment, and yielded to the impulſe of generoſity; but in the moment of reflection which followed, their intereſt prevailed.

There is no force of character in conſtantly doing one thing, however eſtimable it may be. He who ſtudies every day of his life would have equally employed his time in playing, according to the ſtate of his circumſtances; but paſſing from pleaſure to buſineſs, from diſſipation to ſtudy is the mark of a mind independent and endowed with the greateſt vigour.

There are certain awkwardneſſes accompanying

companying actions which deprive them of all their merit. One man is obliging, and renders great ſervices, for which no body thanks him. Another lives at a great expence and paſſes for a miſer. He ſpends nine hundred pounds, yet ſordidneſs is perceptible; fifty pounds more would have made him appear generous.

The ardor of moſt men is but momentary, which is the cauſe of the incoherence of their conduct and ſentiments.

OF DIFFERENT MANNERS OF BEING AFFECTED.

HOW are pleaſures, the world and fortune to be juſtly appreciated? Life is divided into two epochas, that of deſires and that of diſguſt. The odour of the diſhes is delicious to the hungry gueſts who ſit down to table, but diſguſting to thoſe who have made a good dinner.

Whom ſhall I conſult upon pleaſure and happineſs? Muſt he be a young man, burning with deſires, devoted to love, and who believes himſelf the only one who expreſſes the ſentiments of it or feels its emotions? He is convinced that his miſtreſs is the fineſt, moſt ſenſible, and delicate of women. His heart is inflamed by the chimera of friendſhip, and his imagination by the illuſion of glory; his heart, his mind and ſenſes, make him ſigh after a thou-

a thouſand gratifications not within his power.

Interrogate a man of maturer age, who perhaps reaſons with himſelf, that he has never loved nor been loved? He recollects the deceits of his miſtreſſes and the treaſon of his friends. His eyes now open to the illuſion of glory; he knows how eaſily the ſuffrages of men are accorded, and how much meanneſs and fatigue is the price of grandeur. He has been intimately connected with perſons of the greateſt celebrity and conſideration, in whoſe perſons he ſaw nothing but men of intrigue, or the feeble inſtruments of female caprice, and the mode of the times.

Of Happiness.

HAPPINESS and pleaſure affect us in a different manner, and to a certain degree, have nothing in common with each other.

Pleaſure cannot be laſting; it would ſoon loſe its charms, becauſe the mind and ſenſes would quickly be weakened by its vivacity. It leaves a void in the heart, and renders inſipid every object which was intereſting. Pleaſure is not, like happineſs, within ourſelves; it is accidental, and depends on others. Every man may feel a lively pleaſure, but perhaps the heart and ſoul only render us capable of taſting happineſs, for which reaſon thoſe who poſſeſs not exquiſite ſenſibility, have no pretenſions to it.

We recollect pleaſure with regret, but the remembrance of happineſs ſoftens us into

into tears. Pleaſure leaves a diſtinct recollection; we know the object by which it was produced. Happineſs offers nothing determined, becauſe it ſeems to reſide in all who are about us, whilſt we ourſelves communicate it and embelliſh every object.

Happineſs reſembles a gentle warmth proceeding from ourſelves, but which we nevertheleſs enjoy as if it were communicated to us. Pleaſure, which is more exterior and lively, but leſs durable, is ſhed upon us like adventitious heat, of which we are ſoon deprived, becauſe it is not natural.

How is it poſſible to deſcribe that which comes not within our thoughts;—which belongs to ſentiment, and has no determinate principle, yet nevertheleſs, embraces every thing;—which has no more reality than colours, ſenſible to the eye only, and nothing of themſelves? It is ſufficient if I have ſaid what happineſs is not,

not, without its being poſſible for me to expreſs what it is.

Men paſs from infancy to youth, from youth to age: they inſenſibly loſe their faculties. If happineſs be in man himſelf, how can a being, who experiences viciſſitudes, embelliſh objects with the ſame colours, when the principle of action, and warmth by which he was animated, is weakened or extinguiſhed?

There are happy days, but no happy lives; this would be an enchanting dream without once awakening to ſorrow.

But if there be no happy men, there are ſome who are fortunate; many have been favoured by a happy concurrence of circumſtances, and have had many ſpecies of enjoyment conformable to their taſte, character and ſentiment. It is in this ſenſe that the exiſtence of happineſs may be conſidered, and not in a manner abſolute and durable.

There

There are certainly men whoſe lives have not been troubled by any violent chagrin, whoſe rude health has never been impaired by grief or infirmity, and who have arrived at an advanced age, after having enjoyed the pleaſures of each period of life. They ſeem to have been happy; but this has not been demonſtrated.

The manner of feeling conſtitutes happineſs much more than the advantages we poſſeſs, and it is neceſſary to be convinced of this to be happy. It is in the general conſtitution of men, and in the particular character of each, that the principles of happineſs are found.

In conſidering men in general, their ſufferings ſurpaſs their pleaſures and enjoyments. The people in every nation inceſſantly combat want, and privately enjoy certain ſenſations. They are ſtrangers to voluptuouſneſs, and the ſeeds of ſelf-love are almoſt ſtifled in theſe beings, who are continually degraded by want and dependance.

dependance. They have not the ſatisfactory idea of themſelves which elevates and aggrandizes their exiſtence. By inſtinct they are diſpoſed to fly from and forget themſelves; hence comes in part the general craving of the people for ſpirituous and intoxicating liquors. It is not the pleaſure of taſting bad wine which ſeduces a man of the loweſt claſs; he ſeeks, without knowing it, to efface the remembrance of his ſituation; he wiſhes to raiſe his ſpirits which are depreſſed by wretchedneſs: hope lies at the bottom of the cup. In a ſtate of intoxication he becomes another man; his heart is open to confidence, and he ſees none but friends about him; he riſes in his own opinion, and in that of others of the ſame claſs.

The moſt ſavage nations ſeek intoxication. In the Eaſt, where every body is under the yoke of deſpotiſm, thought appears to be a pernicious gift; like gold and ſilver it requires to be buried, and men ſtrive to deſtroy it by the friendly aid of opium. In that country, madmen and idiots

idiots are objects of veneration. Under an oppreſſive government, being deprived of the ſentiment of exiſtence, is looked upon as a ſpecial favour of the Divinity.

The greateſt pleaſure of men, who compoſe the multitude, is the ſatisfying of hunger: they are unacquainted with the pleaſures, emotions, violence, and ecſtaſies of the paſſion of love. Like animals, they are led by the impulſion of nature to unite themſelves to each other, and this ſhort felicity, this gleam of pleaſure, adds to their miſery by the fecundity which multiplies their wants. In this claſs of men, happineſs conſiſts in not ſuffering, and it is the buſineſs of legiſlators to fulfil ſo deſirable an object.

Oh ye ſhepherds of great flocks! ye kings and ſovereigns, whoſe ſuſceptible minds receive pleaſure from the happineſs of others, turn your eyes from your court if you will follow the impulſion of your noble ſentiments! You cannot make happy

happy the free courtiers about your perſons.

An unquenchable thirſt of riches, grandeur and diſtinction, is their governing principle. Turn your attention to the multitude to whom you may give a comfortable exiſtence, the good effects of which will extend to the ſecond generation.

When we think upon happineſs, our ideas are carried to men of an elevated ſituation, in whom ſelf-love and the paſſions produce pleaſures which add to the ſenſations, and to which they frequently give a preference. That in which the people feel no other pleaſure than the ſimple ſatisfaction of a want, to men of ſuperior rank amounts to voluptouuſneſs, which enjoyment is refined, heightened and prolonged.

Nature furniſhes the ſeeds but art brings them to maturity. What is an ear of wild

wild corn compared to an ear of fine wheat produced in cultivated ground?

Nature has provided for the duration of the ſpecies by the attraction of phyſical pleaſure. The rich man, or one in eaſy circumſtances, joins many moral affections to phyſical ſenſations.

Let us ſuppoſe to ourſelves a ſavage, or a poor man, incited by ſtrong deſire, and yielding to this impulſion with the firſt woman he meets, or with his rude companion. He has no idea of beauty; he makes no compariſon; his imagination is not inflamed, nor does his heart feel the leaſt emotion: ſelf-love inſpires him with nothing flattering, or which gives him a better opinion of himſelf. For him the ſhort moment of pleaſure is like an arrow ſhot into the air, which leaves not the ſmalleſt trace behind it.

To this ſimple and true deſcription, oppoſe that of a man of the world, devoted to love and loaded with its favours. He has

has diſtinguiſhed one woman from a great number. Her form, her figure, that agreeable yet undeſcribable ſomething which acts ſo powerfully and inſtantaneouſly has touched his very ſoul. To ſee and hear her is to him ſupreme happineſs. Silence and confuſion are his firſt interpreters. At length he ſpeaks to, preſſes and ſupplicates this woman, who is combating the ſame inclination. His agreeable qualities gain him a preference to his rivals; his ardour triumphs over every obſtacle, and his miſtreſs yields to his deſires.

Recovered from the firſt tranſports, and again himſelf for a while, an effuſion of the moſt tender ſentiments ſucceeds to pleaſure, which is but ſuſpended, ſhortly to be renewed; he repoſes in the happy calm of a gratified paſſion. The ardor of his deſires is abated without being extinguiſhed: he enjoys the paſt and the preſent, and ſees the moment not far diſtant which brings him new tranſports. He is ſatisfied with his choice, and flattered by the reſiſtance he for ſome time experienced; this increaſes

the

the value of his conqueſt. Wit and ſentiment animate their converſation. They will for ever love each other, and theſe moments of felicity will have no end; each revolving day will bring a repetition of them.—They believe ſo—they ſwear to it—charming illuſion, which preſents a chain of delicious enjoyments.

The pleaſures which the cultivation of the mind and an exerciſed imagination, add to what nature has given, have nothing in common with thoſe of the people. The organiſation is the ſame; but the faculties of the latter are to a certain degree benumbed, and never exerciſed but upon very few objects: thoſe of men in a ſuperior claſs carry them with rapidity over an extended ſphere of thought and ſentiment. It may therefore be ſaid, that the happineſs of theſe conſiſts in the exerciſe of their faculties. He who is preſſed with hunger feels a great pleaſure in ſatisfying it; the man whoſe ſelf-love is accompanied with delicacy and ſenſibility, equally requires gratification; a man who

poſſeſſes talents feels a deſire to employ them; he who is ſuſceptible of a profound ſentiment feels a preſſing inclination to attach himſelf, to be affected, to have his feelings ſenſibly touched. But will emotions give happineſs to the man of ſenſibility; will the vain find it in diſtinctions, or will it reſult from the ſuffrages of a whole ſociety to the man whoſe ſelf-love renders him covetous of praiſe? As there are no bounds to the deſires of paſſion, the effect of all theſe momentary advantages will, perhaps, wholly conſiſt in exciting more violent deſires. Reaſon alone may moderate the paſſions of the moral man, and reaſon is a pilot which manœuvres in vain during the height of the ſtorm. What can it do to direct a bark which is carried away by the impetuous guſts of contrary winds?

We are taught and invited by education to mix with general ſociety, and by means of opinion, to join our exiſtence to a multitude of beings which may ſenſibly affect our interior tranquillity. Education ſhould,

ſhould, on the contrary, incline a man to be contented, and to ſearch within himſelf the peace of conſcience, that by its ſuffrages, and the eſtimation of himſelf, he may find uninterrupted happineſs.

If the ſphere of pleaſures, affection, and ſentiment be increaſed for the man above the common claſs, the number of pains, agitations, and vexations are augmented in an immenſe proportion. There are fewer phyſical evils than torments produced by the paſſions and the diſorder of imagination. The real bleſſings of health and tranquillity, all the pleaſures of nature become inſipid to him who is agitated by ambition, tormented by vanity, or whom envy conſumes. You ſee a man to whom fortune has been prodigal in her favours, and who has received from nature a healthy and vigorous conſtitution. He is beloved by his wife and children, who are all dear to him; his preſence gives joy and pleaſure to his family, and yet he appears in it but for a moment. If he lived in the country he would enjoy the pleaſure of doing good

to his numerous tenants, and he has made but three viſits to his vaſt domains. This man feels not the value of health; he enjoys not his fortune. His life, which might leiſurely paſs animated with different intereſts, is conſumed in agitation and fear. Independent by his riches, he devotes himſelf to ſervitude and ſwallows diſguſt. His ſleep, which ought to be peaceful, is troubled by envy and inquietude. He writes, cringes, and ſolicits; he flies from pleaſure in the purſuit of employment contrary to his genius. What ſupreme good is at length to be the reward of ſo many cares? He has renounced life for forty years to ſhew himſelf two years in decrepid old age, his body hung over with two yards of ribbon.

Paſſions are like phyſical deſires; they lead to diſorder; but exhauſted ſtrength puts an end to the latter, whilſt the mind is almoſt conſtantly expoſed to the paſſions, and capable of abandoning itſelf with exceſs to the inquiet and inceſſant deſires of ambition or the impulſions of vanity. Philoſophy affords but few means of repreſſing the

the paſſions, and their continued vivacity permits not the enjoyment of happineſs. Thoſe who approach it the neareſt are men whom moderation of character preſerves from exceſs without weakening the ſentiment which may procure them enjoyments. The happineſs of the people is in the hands of thoſe who govern; theſe can remove from them miſery and want, and procure them employment and ſubſiſtence. The happineſs of more elevated claſſes is not leſs in the power of legiſlators.

The republican conſtitution ſeems more calculated to ſatisfy the moral want of diſtinctions and emotions. Every man under this kind of government feels his abilities, and the means of turning them to advantage are numerous and frequent. The adminiſtration, the honours of the peerage are open in England to the learned and eloquent lawyer. Each citizen is an active part of a great body: his ſelf-love is not confined to his perſon; he enjoys the advantages of his country. If monarchies

have not the ſame means, they have others not leſs powerful, the love of the ſovereign, and the honour and virtues of each profeſſion; diſtinctions are there the aliment of ſelf-love.

After having ſpoken of the happineſs of the people in a body, and of the other claſſes of ſociety, it remains to be examined whether or not there be men happy in an abſolute order by a concurrence of circumſtances united to a favourable conſtitution.

He who has had the moſt continued and lively enjoyments in the order of his ſtrongeſt ſenſations, ſeems to me to be the moſt happy man.

I take, for example, the duke of Epernon, and ſuppoſe, that confined to his bed by a fit of the gout, he had traced back in his mind the events of more than ſixty years of his life. What a ſpace would he have perceived between the feeble beginning of his fortune, and the degree of ſplendor to which

which he rapidly brought it! Favoured from his infancy by a great king, and treated by this monarch as the moſt beloved child, favour, riches, and power were united to render him happy. What enjoyments for a haughty, proud, and ambitious man! Kings ſucceeded to each other, and he remained in poſſeſſion of the honors and a part of the power which had been conferred upon him. His life, ſeveral times threatened, was preſerved by ſuch extraordinary events as to perſuade the vulgar that a particular genius watched over his preſervation. He lived without infirmity to the moſt advanced age. He was ſometimes perſecuted, but never overcome, and difficulties ſerved but to diſplay his courage and open him new reſources. When all France ſhrunk under the power of Richelieu, he only, amidſt the proſcribed and trembling great, ſtill preſerved an aſcendency which awed this miniſter; he preſerved his ſtately height like great trees, which in foreſts laid waſte, time and the axe have reſpected. It may be ſuppoſed that the duke of Epernon would

have found himſelf happy in contemplating in imagination the progreſs of his proſperity, the dangers from which he had eſcaped, the pleaſures of his life, the homages of the great, and the dignity, pomp, and riches which embelliſhed and rendered illuſtrious his long career.

Suppoſe Voltaire, whoſe ſelf-love was ſo delicate, in whom the love of glory was ſo predominant, and who arrived at extreme old age, without having exhauſted the gift of thought, had reflected upon his active and honourable life. In ſeeing the nation proſtrate before his genius, conſidering his various triumphs, and ſinking under the weight of his laurels, ought not he to have acknowledged within himſelf that he had been happy?

The Marſhal Saxe, in his laſt moments, ſaid to a man whom he loved; *Friend, I have had a fine dream.* Theſe words prove that he had the ſentiment of happineſs.

He

He whoſe paſſions are mild, whoſe fortune is equal to his deſires and ſituation, who paſſes his life with his relations and friends and dies in their arms without remorſe, fear, or pain, is another happy man.

Beings in whom the flame of love continually rages with violence, and whoſe heart furniſhes new aliment to their paſſions, feel delicious emotions and give an idea of happineſs. Who can eſtimate what paſſes in the heart and mind of a man violently in love? What numerous enjoyments are offered to him by his imagination; exalted by tenderneſs and heated by the ardour of the ſenſes, every thing is animated about the amorous man; like him, to whom the delirium of a fever preſents phantoms; he hears and ſees perſons abſent; he lives in an enchanted world: time ceaſes for him. Who can tell how many ages a man of exquiſite ſenſations has lived?

If, as I have obſerved, the manner of feeling

feeling be the real value of things, none can judge of the real ſituation of others. The ſick man who appears overcome by his ſufferings, is, perhaps, at the ſame moment in a raviſhing ecſtaſy *. In the poſſeſſion of advantages, the moſt flattering to men, a want of judgment † frequently renders uſeleſs all that nature ſeems to have done for their happineſs.

The irritation of diſordered ſelf-love, joined to an exceſſive delicacy of ſentiment filled the life of Jean-Jacques Rouſſeau with bitterneſs. Neither ſucceſs, riches, nor love, could have made him happy in procuring him tranſient enjoyments, which he would have more ſenſibly

* A man upon the wheel, whoſe confeſſor exhorted him to reſignation, anſwered, "Father, it is "a long time ſince I have been in ſo calm a ſtate "of mind."

† A man of the preſent age, extremely rich, and having it in his power to procure himſelf every pleaſure, enjoying perfect health, and endowed with exterior advantages, died with grief, becauſe he was not a gentleman.

taſted

taſted than any other man. As an edifice falls under the weight of too heavy a roof, ſo was his head weakened by the burden of extreme ſelf-love. This had fatigued his life, and his laſt writings atteſt the change which his ſublime mind had undergone.

Nature has diſtributed portions of happineſs upon thrones, in palaces, in cabins, and in dungeons. When an abundance of rain falls upon the earth, it runs into ſandy ſoils without leaving any traces, whilſt it moiſtens others, fertilizes and becomes incorporated with them. To this may the elements of happineſs be compared. They are aſſembled in vain about certain beings, whilſt others know how to appropriate and enjoy them.

The greateſt obſtacle to happineſs frequently ariſes from a diſproportion between the mind, character and phyſical ſtrength, and from a mixture of undetermined inclinations and vague paſſions.

The

The heart and mind agitated by light and oppoſite impreſſions, know not where to repoſe, and are never powerfully drawn to an object capable of ſatisfying them. In moſt men, there is a mixture of half-paſſions, and weak and uncertain ſenſations. They reſemble gueſts who taſte, without pleaſure, of every diſh before them, without fixing upon any one in particular. Many people attain the end of life, without having taſted enjoyment; and this for want of a ſufficient force of deſire.

There is a kind of happineſs which eſcapes obſervation, and which offers nothing poſitive, although it be real and extended: it is the well-being, which reſults from the plenitude of exiſtence, or the abundance of vital ſpirits. Its influence is, in ſome meaſure, ſhed upon every ſurrounding objeſt—the man is happy, ſolely, becauſe he exiſts. For him nature is an enchanted *parterre*; by the ſight of which he is charmed to exceſs. The air he breaths ſeems pure and dilated, and, at every

every inſtant, appears to give him new life. It is in youth, in the age of vigour, that this happineſs of exiſtence is moſt ſenſible, and then needs not the addition of lively pleaſures. Hence comes that tender and delicious recollection of the ſpring of life which we experience when bordering upon old age. It produces pleaſures without retracing any particular or remarkable ones. The priſm of youth gave a high colouring to every object: that habitation, thoſe woods and meadows are ſtill the ſame; but the eye, which contemplates them, is changed.

From theſe reflections upon happineſs I will conclude, that nature, for the moſt part, beſtows what is neceſſary to it. Reaſon is not, however, without its influence; and the compariſon of our ſtate is the ſureſt means it can employ to make us ſenſible of the advantages we poſſeſs, and of diminiſhing the idea of misfortune. How many people would be happy, if, ſometimes conſidering the advantages they have received from

from nature, the property they poſſeſs, and the health they enjoy, they would compare their ſituation with that of others; if they would ſay to themſelves—the loſs of this property, and theſe advantages, indifferent to me by habitude, would be the greateſt misfortune: would they but recollect the time, when they ſo ſtrongly deſired the objects which they now languiſhingly poſſeſs, and conſider that theſe poſſeſſions and advantages would render thouſands happy, which envy their ſtate; their deſires would become more moderate, and their mind more ſatisfied.

Life is a bad ſort of ſtuff, and receives all its value from the embroidery. Men are often more attached to a certain manner of living than to life itſelf.

Life reſembles a minuet. We make a few ſteps to return; and make our reverence at the place whence we departed.

Dignities and greatneſs are rich robes, which

which dazzle others, and hang heavy upon thoſe who wear them.

He is a weak man who never qualifies himſelf for more than one ſituation in life.

Of the Length of Time.

TIME is meaſured by the impatience of deſire, and the dread of a fatal moment to which we approach.

Time ſeems to be abridged by the epochas and diviſions which give us an idea of it. The uniformity of ſituations, when they are not too much agitated, increaſes the idea of its duration. The traveller, who croſſes great plains, is more impatient than he would be upon a road, varied by woods, mountains and habitations. The imagination repoſes, with pleaſure, upon

ſucceſſive

ſucceſſive objects, which mark both ſpace and time as they paſs.

Monks feel not as much languor as men of the world; becauſe all their hours are differently employed. Each diviſion of the day, conſecrated to prayer or reading, offer to the imagination a ſhort ſpace to paſs over. The contemplation of the duties of a whole day, would be frightful.

There is no time for the Divinity; never changing, either in thought or ſentiment, and being univerſal, for him there is neither preſent nor future.

We ſometimes reſemble the Supreme Being in this reſpect; when we are greatly affected by a delicious ſenſation, or even by heavy grief. The continuation, in the ſame degree, of a lively ſentiment confounds every thing. Time is then no more; nothing can eſtabliſh the diſtribution of it, becauſe there is no difference in the ſentiment.

In

In youth, the ſenſes have a wonderful aptitude to being affected. This is the ſeaſon of the emotions of the ſoul, and the delirium of the paſſions. Impreſſions are ſtrong and laſting; all objects are new, and their effects more ſenſible. The deſires are ſtrong and tumultuous, and curioſity is inſatiable. Youth live in futurity, and imagine to themſelves pleaſures far above thoſe which they have the power of enjoying.

The frequency of deſires and enjoyments multiply the epochas of early age: life ſeems to have no period, and to be an inexhauſtible treaſure. The variety of ſituations neceſſarily make the time of youth paſs rapidly; but the ardour of deſire makes it ſometimes appear long: it is at this age that we ſo frequently ſay, I would give a year of my life to be at ſuch a day.

At the epocha which ſucceeds to that of youth, deſires become leſs ardent; the ſituation of the man is determined, his curioſity weakened, and his occupations fixed.

His life has no longer ſo many vibrations, becauſe his ſentiments and ideas have more conſiſtence. He quietly enjoys the preſent, and deſires, not with impatience, the future. At this age he has ſeen a reſemblance in every thing. His paſſions become his taſtes, and he œconomizes his pleaſures. Time then more ſwiftly glides away, becauſe he has fewer deſires and more pleaſures, and fears the approach of old age, which he ſees in perſpective. He ſoon begins to calculate with himſelf; he perceives that half at leaſt of his courſe is run. His faculties diminiſh; the fear of ſeeing them annihilated, of finding the ſource of his pleaſures dried up, make his days ſeem to paſs the more rapidly, as each day deprives him of a part of himſelf.

Of Ennui*.

ENNUI is the painful ſentiment of exiſtence. Extreme vivacity of mind ends in languor, becauſe objects are too rapidly paſſed in review, without reſting upon any one in particular. A lively imagination, unaccompanied with ſtrength of mind, is a conſtant principle of languor.

A mixture of indolence and ardor, nearly equal, muſt render a man unhappy. In this ſtate of uncertainty, he feels the torments of deſire, and an averſion to the cares and efforts by which it might be ſatisfied. Alternately excited by indolence and ambition, he enjoys neither the charms of repoſe nor the pleaſures of ſucceſs.

* The tranſlator has choſen, on this occaſion, to adopt the French word; which may be rendered in Engliſh by lapitude, languor wearineſs, diſguſt, impatience, according to circumſtances.

When love and its pleaſures have entirely filled up the ſpace of youth, the following epocha of life has neither taſtes nor deſires. The enervated mind has no longer ſufficient ſtrength to enjoy pleaſures, diſengaged from the ſenſes; it had remained without food or exerciſe, and the ſenſes are now entirely benumbed. In ſuch a ſtate, a man wanders like a phantom in the midſt of pleaſures, which the generality of men purſue with avidity. Having no intereſt in ſociety, nor capacity for buſineſs, he feels the void of languor.

The ambitious man, who is obliged to renounce all his hopes, is in a ſtate ſimilar to that I have juſt deſcribed. Wholly governed by an object which he poſſeſſes not, the univerſe is for him a ſorrowful abode. In vain does the ſpring embelliſh the earth: it is the riſing of the prince, and not that of the ſun, which has an effect upon his mind. He is inſenſible to the delightful view of nature; that of a nu-

a numerous anti-chamber alone can intereſt him, and open his ſoul to joy. He carries with him, every where, an overwhelming languor, which nothing can diſſipate.

DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

A MINISTER IN DISGRACE

AND

A PHYSICIAN.

THE MINISTER.

I HAVE heard much of your abilities, Sir; and, in complaiſance to my friends, am determined to confide myſelf to your ſkill, however weak may be my hopes of a cure.

PHYSICIAN.

You think, perhaps, my lord, that I apply myſelf to the cure of bodily infirmities. My whole attention is directed to thoſe of the mind; and it is by the cure of theſe that the former often diſappear. I am a moral phyſician. Moſt of the diſor-

ders of the animal œconomy ariſe from the licentiouſneſs of the paſſions. This I have learned from experience. I have ſtudied all the affections of the mind, their principles and effects; and have endeavoured to diſcover the oppoſition of the paſſions to each other; the different inclinations by which men are governed, and their greater or leſſer degree of force; the influence of indolence, which weakens and modifies them, and the greater or leſſer domination of vanity, which ſubſtitutes tormenting chimeras to realities, which would become a ſource of happineſs. My three means of cure conſiſt in *calming*, *directing* and *animating*. After this expoſition, you are to judge whether or not you will enter into explanations with me. In this caſe I expect you will be candid, as diſſimulation would be uſeleſs to you: taught by the habitude of reflection how to penetrate what is attempted to be hidden, it frequently happens, that thoſe who ſay but a word to me, have no need of proceeding farther.

MINISTER.

MINISTER.

Your manner of treatment is of little conſequence to me, provided you perform a cure. The remedies hitherto preſcribed have fatigued me extremely, without affording me the leaſt relief.

PHYSICIAN.

Mine have, at leaſt, this advantage, that they injure not the conſtitution.

MINISTER.

For which reaſon I am inclined to try them. I will relate to you the nature of my indiſpoſition, and you may be aſſured of my candour. For the laſt twelve months I have had ſuch a weight upon my ſpirits, as to abſorb all my faculties. I have taken medicines proper for diſorders in the liver; but theſe have had no effect.

PHYSICIAN.

Your lordſhip's illneſs ſeems to be a ſerious one. Your complexion, the hollowneſs

neſs of your eyes, and your emaciated appearance, incline me to ſuſpect that your lordſhip has an obſtruction in the liver.

MINISTER.

This is what I have been told. I will farther obſerve to you, Sir, that my digeſtion is difficult, and my ſleep troubled with the moſt fatiguing dreams. I conſtantly think I am falling from the top of a mountain, and that I am purſued by foxes and ſerpents, which bark and hiſs about my ears.

PHYSICIAN.

I cannot conceal from your lordſhip that your illneſs is dangerous. I am no ſtranger to the nature of it; but, in my whole life, I have never cured above two or three perſons who laboured under it to the ſame degree.

MINISTER.

And what do you call it, Sir?

PHYSICIAN.

PHYSICIAN.

You know, my lord, that nothing is more dangerous than the ſmall-pox, when the puſtules come not to an eruption. The repercuſſion of the variolic matter, which ſhould diſcharge itſelf exteriorly, produces the moſt ſerious effects. Your lordſhip is exactly in this ſituation; your illneſs is an ambition not brought to a head.

MINISTER.

You do not know me, Sir; you judge of my illneſs by the ſituation in which I have been: but I am a philoſopher; and, if I ſometimes regret my having quitted the adminiſtration, it is from the deſire I have of being uſeful to mankind. I think nobody can ſuſpect me of coveting riches.

PHYSICIAN.

I do not ſay that, my lord: I am perſuaded of your diſintereſtedneſs. I will agree with your lordſhip that your object is the happineſs of men; but agree with me in your turn, that you wiſh to be

be the author of it, and that, in your idea, it is leſs valuable when conferred by others.

MINISTER.

A commendable ſelf-love, in my opinion; and, to a certain degree, I do not deny it.

PHYSICIAN.

I pretend not to blame your lordſhip; but the queſtion is, the cauſe of your ſufferings, and the means of removing it. The moſt able of all phyſicians would be the king.——But perhaps his majeſty is not determined to employ efficacious means to cure your lordſhip. All I can undertake is, to mitigate by uſing palliatives; for the illneſs is almoſt incurable, eſpecially when the patient makes no effort to ſecond the phyſician, and that, in his character, he has no means of combating ſo dangerous a complaint. Your lordſhip will permit me to aſk, if you have children; and if you love them?

MINISTER.

MINISTER. *(with a ſigh)*

Do I love my child!—I have an only ſon, the hope of my family, for whom I thought of procuring the moſt brilliant eſtabliſhment, at the time I was driven from place.

PHYSICIAN.

I perceive your lordſhip had your ſon's preferment at heart. But was he equally deſirous of his own happineſs? and was not it his name which flattered his ſelf-love? Was not it, in ſome degree, the perpetuity of himſelf, ſo to ſpeak, which he had in view? Pardon me, my lord; but I am obliged to ſpeak to you in the language of truth, which your lordſhip had loſt the habitude of hearing.—Is it long ſince your lordſhip has ſeen your ſon?

MINISTER.

Almoſt ſix months. In my preſent ſtate of languor, I avoid all ſociety: it is the effect of my ſituation.

PHYSICIAN.

PHYSICIAN.

I perceive, my lord, that your ſon is not neceſſary to your happineſs, ſince you deprive yourſelf of the pleaſure of ſeeing him. May I aſk after her ladyſhip?

MINISTER.

We live but little together; her taſte differs from mine. She has other ſocieties.

PHYSICIAN.

Before I can undertake to give your lordſhip relief, you muſt permit me ſome queſtions, which, in any other circumſtances, would be very indiſcreet. Has your lordſhip ever had any tender attachments?

MINISTER.

To ſay the truth, I look upon ſentiment, and what is called the heart, as words devoid of ſenſe, invented by women to juſtify their weakneſſes. I have always had an attachment of habitude, which is,

in

in ſome meaſure, decent in a man in place, and uſeful to gain him information: this, and an inclination to thwart the projects of others, is all the information I can give you upon the ſubject.

PHYSICIAN.

I conceive your lordſhip's heart not to be ſuſceptible, for which I am very ſorry. It is an illuſion, if you pleaſe; but it would be a real advantage in your preſent ſituation. The beauties of nature have, as I imagine, but few charms for your lordſhip.

MINISTER.

I have conſtantly heard ſpeak of nature, but I know not exactly what it is; and I confeſs to you, that the decorations of an opera appear to me as agreeable as the fineſt garden; not but I have expended a great deal in Engliſh gardens, and in ruins.—

PHYSICIAN.

With reſpect to ruins, miniſters have much

much in their power for ſuch kinds of ornament.

MINISTER.

An ill-timed pleaſantry, Sir—but I pardon you, on account of its ſingularity.

PHYSICIAN.

Pardon me, my lord—I return to the ſubject. Your lordſhip is inſenſible to the charms of nature. Hence I muſt conclude, that the beautiful of any kind has no power over your mind. A fine ſtatue, or picture, or excellent muſic, has undoubtedly no effect upon your lordſhip; for arts are the imitation only of nature.

MINISTER.

All this I confeſs. But why theſe queſtions?

PHYSICIAN.

To know what has an effect upon you, that I may find means to increaſe the action of certain things, and diminiſh that of others. Have you any taſte for letters?

MINISTER.

MINISTER.

I have always had men of letters at my table, but their converſation was not very intereſting to me; and as for books, I like thoſe only which treat of preſent affairs.

PHYSICIAN.

The Gazette, for inſtance! It is agreeable enough to read; but the events related in it may cauſe diſagreeable reflections in your preſent ſtate of mind. I had ſome idea that your lordſhip was fond of literature; but I perceive, that all you intended by receiving men of letters was, to procure yourſelf public ſuffrage. They were the trumpets of your fame.

MINISTER.

Have you finiſhed your queſtions, Sir?

PHYSICIAN.

I have, my lord, ſince I know your conſtitution and illneſs. This is ſerious; and your conſtitution leaves but few means to be employed in the cure.

MINISTER.

You have cured people, as you assure me, who were in the same situation.

PHYSICIAN.

It is true: but the patients had, within themselves, resources which my art teaches me to develope, and of which I knew how to make the best use. One of them had a taste for letters and the arts; the other had a heart capable of tender attachment. I taught them both how to turn to advantage their inclinations and affections.

MINISTER.

Are there no other means which you can efficaciously employ for me?

PHYSICIAN.

Your mind is not susceptible; your heart is incapable of tender affection; your age permits not much sensual enjoyment, and you have no taste for the fine arts. Judge, my lord, of the difficulty of rendering you any service. I have nothing to proceed upon. Those who are accustomed to lively

pleasures,

pleaſures, have loſt the means, as well as the habitude, of being animated by mild and peaceful amuſements. Their mind contracts the habitude of languor, like that which, for a moment, is felt after the noiſy exploſion of a fire-work. It is a great misfortune to ſtand in need of being ſtrongly intereſted, and yet incapable of it in every way but one. Folly is the domination of one only object. To anticipate this in its principle, ſeveral objects muſt be made to act upon the mind, ſo as to produce an oppoſition, and excite a moderate combat of different inclinations, which prevents the tyranny of a ſingle one. Your lordſhip is not far from a ſtate of folly, if you take not great care.

MINISTER.

Sir! Do you think as you ſpeak?—A man whoſe judgment, I venture to ſay, has been applauded—

PHYSICIAN.

Yes, my lord; but that man was in his element when his knowledge ſhone forth.

Nothing is pleaſing in your eyes but the attitude of reſpect, and praiſes only can flatter your ears. Your attention is engaged by nothing but the movement of great intereſts, which are continually before you: I cannot procure an anti-chamber full of men, who come to ſolicit favours, nor furniſh your table with attentive auditors, who are ready to laugh, or applaud, according as your lordſhip is gay, or inclined to ſerious diſcuſſion. Finally, I cannot fill your mind with affairs of importance, which concern great perſonages, or have an influence upon the fate of millions of men.

MINISTER.

I have, then, no remedy to hope for; and your profound knowledge——

PHYSICIAN.

——Will not be quite uſeleſs. It will ſerve to ſtop the progreſs of your diſorder, and diminiſh its force; remedies would be ineffectually applied to your mind, becauſe it has no taſte, and is incapable of affection;

tion; therefore the body only can be operated upon, and in this reſpect my advice, my lord, is very ſimple: your lordſhip muſt take ſtrong exerciſe, and give to your body an extreme movement, ſo as to fatigue it, that the dominion of the mind may become leſs ſenſible: you muſt frequently change the air, converſe with men you have never ſeen, whom your reputation will, for ſome time, render attentive to your perſon; their conſideration for you will be but momentary, but it will create you ſome illuſion; for, in fact, what is it you want?—to engage the attention of others. Dionyſius, the tyrant, after being dethroned, became a ſchoolmaſter: this was not badly judged; he was liſtened to; he diſtributed rewards and puniſhments; it was ſtill, in fact, an exerciſe of power *.

MINISTER.

But, Sir, you are a moral phyſician, and

* M. Hewman maintains that this laſt circumſtance, related in the life of Dionyſius, is not true.

Tranſlator.

you prescribe exercise to cure me of the jaundice. Any other physician, whom I might have consulted, would, without pretending, like you, to cure the affections of the mind, have pointed out the same remedy.

PHYSICIAN.

What I prescribe your lordship are no more than palliatives, and I agree that any other physician would have done the same thing; but there is one remedy which I hesitate to propose: it is not common, yet applicable to the disorders which I profess to cure; the fear of alarming your lordship, has hitherto prevented me from mentioning it.

MINISTER.

What is it? I am determined to adopt it, be it what it may.

PHYSICIAN.

Very well, my lord—it is to get yourself exiled.

MINISTER.

MINISTER.

Do you think ſo? Would you propoſe to me to add to my misfortune?

PHYSICIAN.

Ah! my lord, you know not the pleaſure an ambitious man has in being exiled; exile is a continuation of public conſideration: there is ſomething agreeable in a misfortune which is not common, which is confined to ourſelves, and diſtinguiſhes us from others. A man in exile produces a greater effect in the world; a miniſter in diſgrace is more talked of; he is obliged to ſummon all his fortitude, to bear up under oppreſſion; there is merit in ſupporting it, the mind acquires new vigour——

MINISTER.

——But, Sir, I am ſurprized you do not preſcribe a priſon.

PHYSICIAN.

Do not joke, my lord. A few months in a caſtle are not to be deſpiſed; this might give ſome conſideration: perſecu-

tion has its charms; but I confine myſelf to methods more mild; think of the pleaſures of exile, compared to the inconveniencies of liberty. If a man had uſurped a great name, and had made a ſplendid appearance in the world, what more cruel torment could he ſuffer, than to be obliged to live in the ſame ſociety, degraded and deſpoiled?

MINISTER.

Your compariſon has ſome relation to the ſituation of a miniſter out of place; but the loſs of liberty is frightful.

PHYSICIAN.

A thouſand times leſs to a fallen miniſter than the repeated diſdain of thoſe with whom he lives, and the continual recollection of what he has loſt. Exile is not, for him, accompanied by the mortification of finding his equals in thoſe who are about him, and of being like every other man in ſociety; of reading indifference in each countenance, of being confounded with the crowd, and elbowed on

all

all ſides; of being accoſted with familiarity by perſons who, when he was in power, were proſtrate before him, and of continually hearing the converſation turn upon his ſucceſſor, his plan of operation, and the favour he enjoys. In exile he is filled with the hope of obtaining his liberty, and imagines that, after his enlargement, he ſhall make a more diſtinguiſhed figure in the world. Believe me, my lord, exile has many advantages; and I take it to be a refinement of malice in kings, not to exile their miniſters, inſtead of rendering them to the common ſociety of men, there to ſuffer their contempt, and be buried in the midſt of the living. The liberty a king gives to a miniſter, is a mark of contempt, and as much as to ſay to him—I fear neither your cabals nor thoſe of your friends! It ſeems that when a miniſter is exiled, he has the honour of being feared, and that his intrigues, and the influence he may have upon the minds of the people, are to be guarded againſt. Conſideration for a man in exile, is preſerved by his being at a diſtance; but, conſtantly under the inſpection

tion of ſociety, he loſes a part of his merit. Reflect upon this, my lord, and you will perceive how advantageous an exile would be to you. I think I could anſwer for your health, if the king would confer upon you that favour.

They who are governed by ſelf-love, whoſe actions are directed by vanity, having no ſolid pleaſures of the mind, nor of the ſenſes even, feel a ſenſible uneaſineſs when they engage not the attention of thoſe about them. The perpetual want of being flattered and attended to in ſociety, renders them inſenſible to almoſt every kind of pleaſure. Their ſelf-love is a real malady.

Men governed by the paſſion of love or ambition, and all who are tormented with a reigning deſire, have moments of languor; each day produces for them but a few hours of enjoyment.

The

The contrariety of taſtes and paſſions, the dominion or annihilation of an inclination, and that of the faculties, are feeble cauſes of languor. A happy mixture of leiſure and occupation animates men, and makes them ſuſceptible of every pleaſure.

Men to whom enjoyments are become inſipid by their variety, and the facility of acquiring them, are no longer ſuſceptible of any kind of paſſion. Convinced of the nothingneſs of ambition, ſatiated with the pleaſures of love, and, by their delicacy and diſcernment become difficult upon the arts, upon wit, manners and literature; it muſt be ſomething ſingular, or extraordinary, that can afford them amuſement. If their mind has preſerved any of its faculties, the novelty of misfortune is, perhaps, the only thing which can rouze them from languor. This ſtate of apathy ultimately produces univerſal diſdain. It leads men to deſpiſe fame, and, perhaps, to the contempt of others. Perſons in ſuch a ſtate, are thoſe who, ſo to ſpeak, have quickly made

made the tour of the planet they inhabit.

There are people whoſe converſation or preſence ever excites languor in others: they may be divided into two claſſes—men who, by the void in their minds, communicate wearineſs; and they who are fatiguing by a ſuperabundance of unintereſting converſation; thus want and ſuperfluity are ſources of languor.

CHARACTER OF A TIRESOME MAN.

CLEOPHON has never been able to attain a uniſon of ideas with thoſe who converſe with him. When he relates, he never aſſembles the circumſtances which ought to make his narrative intereſting: he expatiates upon trifles, and never changes the tone of his voice, nor raiſes his geſture; he has no variety of action, and is quite ſurprized to ſee his hearers yawn at a ſtory which had made him laugh. Cleophon knows not how to converſe. His reaſons are ill-timed, and he wants the diſcernment neceſſary to chuſe proper ſubjects. He is unmerciful in details upon indifferent matters, and in his length of reaſoning, when a word would be ſufficient. He has no flexibility of mind, and it frequently happens that he anſwers his own ideas, without hearkening to what is ſaid by others. His language and manner are the ſame, whether he ſpeaks to a lady,

a wit,

a wit, or to a man in place. Cleophon has, unfortunately, ſome ſenſe and information which, to him, are ſo many more means of rendering himſelf inſupportable. Women, men of ſenſe, and fools even, equally avoid him. He is like a diſcordant inſtrument in a concert. Every one trembles when he begins to ſpeak; nobody harkens to him; and the whole circle waits with impatience until he has finiſhed. He produces the ſame effect as the loud ringing of a bell; it ſuſpends converſation, which, when the noiſe ceaſes, is immediately renewed. It muſt not be ſuppoſed that delicate perſons are his only victims. Languor is a contagion which ſpreads itſelf upon every claſs of men. The porter, the coachman, and valet of Cleophon feel the ſame languor with which their maſter infects ſociety. The ſervant behind his chair, yawns, and returns to the antichamber to complain of his fatiguing narratives, and dull diſſertations.

In virtues, and moſt actions we admire, without conſidering the force which is the principle of them.

The

The tears we ſtrive to hide are the moſt affecting. The violence we thus do ourſelves ſhews both courage and ſenſibility.

Laughter is nevér more ſtrong than when we endeavor to ſuppreſs it. Every oppoſition ſtrengthens deſire: the wave which meets with obſtacles foams, becomes impetuous, or riſes into the air.

Liberty was given to man to leave him the merit of virtue.

He who inceſſantly yields to deſires ſoon becomes inſenſible of their charms.

Conſtitutional virtues are nothing more than want of deſire. Virtue conſiſts in the combat of the will and its triumph over deſires.

Juſtice ſpares the mind much pain. Good qualities in a private man are ſo many virtues.

The

The ſacrifice of fame, the combat of the moſt tender affections, and the painful moderation of generoſity and ſenſibility conſtitute the virtue of a public man.

A portion of pride ſufficient to remind us of what we owe to ourſelves, and ſenſibility enough to prevent our forgetting what we owe to others, will produce the virtue of modern times.

Taſte is not dangerous, except when the purſuit of its objects is the conſtant employment of our time.

Of Friendship.

IT is frequently ſaid, that thoſe who can hate, know how to love; as if theſe two ſentiments had the ſame principle. Affection comes from the heart, and hatred from irritated ſelf-love, or ſome inclination fruſtrated.

Perſons muſt love ſomething in common, before their love for each other can be durable. What, except virtue, can we love, without fearing that jealouſy or oppoſition of intereſts will diminiſh the warmeſt friendſhip?

How can friendſhip exiſt between vicious perſons? After having broken all other ties, can thoſe of friendſhip be expected to contain them?

The preſence of a friend is neceſſary to us: we wiſh to divide with him our pleaſures, by which they become more lively; but in love, we want to be alone, and need not the addition of any thing foreign to it. Friendſhip increaſes the value of objects; but love ſupplies the place of every thing.

Friendſhip is to love, what an engraving is to a painting.

Love, having an end to fulfil, has its meridian, decline, and concluſion.

We wiſh friendſhip were eternal, whilſt in general it has no ſolid baſis to reſt upon. It is like Ixion embracing a cloud.

Character changes, ſituations and fortune vary, affairs become multiplied, and taſte leſs delicate: a man has new attachments, he becomes a huſband and father; new relations are eſtabliſhed between him and others; and yet it is expected, a former attachment ſhould ſurvive all theſe viciſſitudes,

viciſſitudes, without loſing any part of its force or charms, and ſhould equally engage the heart.

THE TWO FEMALE FRIENDS.

AGLAE' was in a convent, and had the moſt tender friendſhip for Doris. They reſembled two young plants which grew up together. They felt every thing in common, and reciprocally communicated their pains and pleaſures. They underſtood each other by a ſingle word, and ſeemed to have a particular language to expreſs their thoughts. Their friendſhip increaſed in proportion as they acquired the age when the ſenſes begin to be animated. The ſecret and powerful inclination which beings have to become united, attracted each to the other. They felt infinite pleaſure in meeting, were prodigal in

their careſſes, and their minds ſeemed to be agitated by moſt of the emotions of love. Was ever friendſhip more tender!—Their mild and equal characters, their ſenſible and affectionate minds ſeemed to promiſe a continuation of it. Aglaé left the convent, and was married. A new object took poſſeſſion of her heart, and infatuated her ſenſes. What was the ſituation of Doris? She became the confident of her friend, who never came to viſit her but to ſpeak of her own happineſs. Doris was married in her turn, and the ſimilarity of their ſituations ſeemed to produce in them an increaſe of friendſhip: their communications were mutual. But one of them was ſoon led away by the torrent of diſſipation, whilſt the other was concentred in the circle of her family: one ceaſed to love her huſband, who ſoon had ſucceſſors in her heart: the other had children whom ſhe loved with all the tenderneſs of a mother, and her whole time was employed in directing their education. What ſubject of converſation now remained to Aglaé and Doris?—One ſpoke of her lover, and the other

other of her children. They no longer underſtood each other; the objects of their attention bore no reſemblance, and oppoſite ſentiments had poſſeſſion of their minds: the remembrance of their former connections was ſtill dear to them, but their intercourſe became languiſhing. There was no longer between them a conformity of inclination, manners and ſentiment; nevertheleſs their friendſhip, although languid and without motive will, perhaps, for twenty years, be quoted as a model.

ALCESTES has an intimate friend. He becomes enamoured, and his friend then holds but the ſecond place in his affections. Sentiments are like diamonds, in which the leaſt difference in ſize and quality makes the greateſt in their price.

VALSIN is making a great fortune. He fills an eminent place, the functions of which are abſolutely foreign to his friend. He can give him but a few moments, and it is impoſſible to confide to him intereſts too far removed from his ſituation. Of

what uſe would it be to aſk his advice, upon matters which he does not underſtand? Their affection muſt naturally diminiſh. They do not quarrel, but their friendſhip conſiſts only in the name.

Another man loves hunting, muſic, or the theatre. He has a friend, who is fond of the ſame amuſements. He ceaſes to take pleaſure in theſe: his friend's taſte changes alſo; but his attention is directed to different objects; he has other purſuits in life. What have theſe intimate friends to converſe upon? What object intereſts them in common?

Two friends have been united for twenty years by a conformity of temper, character, and taſte: their connection ſeems to be as laſting as their lives. One of them becomes unhealthy. His temper changes, he is difficult, and expects extraordinary attention. His friend remains attached to him, as well from a conſtancy of character, as becauſe he has in ſome meaſure engaged to do it in the eyes of the world; but he ſuffers

ſuffers interiorly; diſſimulates, and, in ſpite of himſelf, becomes deceitful: unhappy is it for him if he is under obligations to his friend! He finds himſelf bound with the moſt galling chains; he can no longer act according to his own ſentiments; his mind is captive, his tongue forced to expreſs what he does not feel, and his eyes to ſhew marks of grief or ſatisfaction of which he does not partake. Examine his heart. So much conſtraint has produced hatred, and this falſe friendſhip, yet favourably ſpoken of by every body ſeem, in the eyes of the world, to conſtitute his happineſs.

"Moſt laſting friendſhips," ſays the Cardinal de Retz, "are produced by a "continuation of happineſs. There is "no perſon," adds the Cardinal, "who "thinks not he does honour to the "wretch he ſerves."

If principles, ſo frequently confirmed by experience, were engraved on the minds of men, they would complain leſs of each other. Events, which are contrary to theſe

examples, ought to be looked upon as fortunate; and we ſhould previouſly expect to find levity and perfidy in mankind.

Friends frequently become inſupportable in adverſity; they abound in counſels contrary to our inclinations, and reproach us with the faults we may have committed; they blame the principle whence they aroſe, although in other caſes they have a thouſand times admired it. They wiſh the fire to give warmth, but not a burning heat: in the moſt trifling circumſtances we muſt conduct ourſelves according to their manner. When fortune is adverſe, the ſuffering friend becomes a ſubject, upon which ſelf-love and an imperious mind are anxious to exerciſe an empire.

Screen me from my friends, cried the proſcribed Gourrille, *I ſhall know how to defend myſelf againſt my enemies.*

Beneficence is frequently nothing more than a ſecret deſire of domination.

The

The teſtament of moſt men, is only the publication of their indifference, ingratitude and pride.

Our love for others is frequently in proportion to the power we have of obliging them; we become indifferent about their welfare the moment it depends no longer upon our ſervices.

We wiſh to make others happy; but not that by their own efforts they ſhould become ſo.

It ſometimes happens that women love none among their friends, but the living witneſſes of the charms, ſucceſſes, and agreeableneſſes of their youth.

It has always been ſaid, that equality was neceſſary to the union of friendſhip. Reflection and examples prove there are exceptions to this antiquated maxim.

A rich and powerful friend, and one without fortune, accord perfectly with each

each other. The former finds an object whereupon to exercise his beneficence and domination: the latter, in some measure, an object of worship, and an association in all the advantages of his friend; in his fame, credit, and successes of every kind, they all become his own. Raised by friendship to the rank of his protector, nobody is more interested in his support. These, it will be said, are the ties of interest; I allow it, if there be no natural inclination; but if this exists, it will be more solid, lively and durable between two friends whose fortunes are widely different. Self-love will be perpetually animated in one, by the pleasure of conferring happiness in the other, by all the enjoyments in which he finds himself an associate, and by the attention he receives from others on account of the affection his friend bears him.

Man has more need to admire than is generally supposed; and he voluntarily yields to this sentiment when there is no rivality.

If

If equality were eſſentially neceſſary to friendſhip, they would never exiſt between a maſter and his ſlave or ſervant. What ſignifies the name? Whether it be called attachment, or any thing elſe; is not the ſentiment which renders one being precious to another always an affection?

When equality is ſuppoſed neceſſary, an equality of every kind muſt be admitted as eſſential; ſuch as that of fortune, underſtanding, &c. The greateſt inequality in intimate intercourſe is that of the underſtanding; for this may be felt at every inſtant.

Friendſhip is more rare in proportion to elevation and fortune, becauſe intereſt makes more hypocrites in ſentiment. There are more falſe friendſhips; but true ones do not leſs exiſt in unequal ſituations.

There is an affection of reaſon, and another of inſtinct; men are under the influence of the latter, and attracted by that which flatters their ſelf-love, and preſents them

them advantages. They are innocently miſtaken in believing the perſon to be dear to them, whereas it is moſtly the ſplendour about him, and the power he poſſeſſes by which they are captivated. But the perſon is ſtill beloved on account of the manner in which he enjoys his greatneſs, and of the uſe he makes of his power. Honeſt men are deceived by ſentiment; but knaves are guided by a rational intereſt.

If friendſhip exiſts, it is perhaps confined to the virtuous: friends muſt have no difficulty in telling each other every thing, and how it is poſſible not to conceal ſomething when they have ſhameful things to reveal?

When our friend is ſick we give him our aſſiduous cares, and are full of inquietude; yet, if his indiſpoſition be but momentary, although ever ſo painful, we are under no anxiety becauſe we have no apprehenſions of loſing him. This is one proof to be added to thoſe which manifeſt the

the love of ourſelves and of the advantages in the perſons of others.

Chrisis, in ſpeaking of his fortune, ſays, he owes it all to Dorcas; he ſhews the greateſt deference in every thing to the opinion of his friend. It is the leaſt I can do, ſays he, to acknowledge his good ſervices. The gratitude of Chriſis is quoted as a rare model; but he does not tell you that his fortune is the work of an obſcure individual. He likes better to owe it to Dorcas, who is a great man and can again oblige ſo grateful a friend.

The inclination to admire, and the impulſion by which men are led to approach the great, are manifeſted by the extreme attachment of the people, which is exalted by the moſt trifling ſervices. Their hearts are full of the moſt lively affection for the perſons of men of diſtinction; ſelf-love, flattered by their attention, produces attachment and enthuſiaſm.

It is not, therefore, equality by which the

the affections are determined; on the contrary, inequality is frequently their moſt active principle, becauſe ſelf-love and vanity are predominant in men.

Love requires a reſemblance of character in ſome reſpects, and a difference in others; the invincible attraction of the ſexes is founded upon this principle. In friendſhip, a conformity of taſte and a difference of character are equally neceſſary. Every moral as well as phyſical union, every perfection in an individual ſeems as if it were the reſult of oppoſite qualities; goodneſs is nothing if it be not united to firmneſs.

There is a portion of ſelf-love in all our ſentiments. It is like fire which feeds itſelf every where, even in the coldeſt ſubſtances. We cannot but acknowledge that in friendſhip it ſeeks to be flattered. What friendſhip would exiſt after the certainty of a diminution in the opinion of our merits? but if ſelf-love be mortified by a diſadvantageous compariſon, it ought to be humiliated

humiliated by an unſatisfactory choice. The neceſſity of being flattered as well by our friend as in the choice of him, ſeems to preſent contradictions; but theſe are only in appearance. It is in different qualities that a certain neceſſary ſuperiority muſt be found, to furniſh a particular reaſon for eſteem without rivality.

Perfect friendſhip may reſult from a connection between two perſons diſtinguiſhed by different merits. For this reaſon friendſhip is never more affectionate, ſenſible and durable, than between a man and a woman. In ſuch an union, it is that we can praiſe with pleaſure and admire without effort; the mind and character mutually ſoften and fortify each other. Senſibility animates what reflection had almoſt exhauſted. The habitude of deference on one part, and a certain reſerve on the other, ſet bounds to familiarity, prevent the languor which proceeds from unreſtrained enjoyment, and continue the deſire of pleaſing and intereſting. Finally, in friendſhip as well as in love, men are happy

happy with women both by what they have and what they have not.

It is poſſible to write for and againſt friendſhip; and, with more or leſs eloquence, attack or defend its exiſtence: but there is one true principle to go upon, and perhaps the queſtion has not yet been fairly ſtated.

Friendſhip is the reſult of natural diſpoſition, a ſuſceptible heart and a generous mind.

Mutual love requires an intereſting object, in common, without rivality.

Men are capable of loving certain things more than life. Republicans prefer the public weal to glory, riches, or exiſtence. Certain monarchs have inſpired their ſubjects with an enthuſiaſtic love for their perſons, and it is a known fact, that at the death of the emperor Otho ſeveral citizens, whom his loſs had driven to deſpair, put an end to their lives.

In

In times of trouble and faction, there are found many examples of courageous and durable friendſhip, becauſe friends are animated by the ſame intereſt, which in ſome degree confounds their perſons with the object by which their imaginations are inflamed.

From theſe ſhort reflections it may be concluded, that the influence of government is extreme upon our ſentiments and affections. Inſtitutions, which teach men to ſacrifice their private intereſts, and to prefer moral objects to all others, prepare ſuſceptible minds for affectionate attachments, and as in ſuch governments morals are pure, and men not repeatedly ſatiated with ſenſual enjoyments, the mind ſeldom loſes any part of its vigour.

But in an age when perſonal intereſt predominates, and phyſical pleaſures are the general objects of deſire, there are few or no real friendſhip, no ſincere affection nor true patriotiſm; there is

no profound or durable ſentiment in the mind.

All I have ſaid againſt friendſhip is applicable to the vanity, levity and deceit of modern times, and of the age in which I live. But is man capable of real friendſhip? This cannot be denied; it is clearly demonſtrated by a perfect knowledge of the human heart and of the influence of governments.

Of Women and Gallantry.

HE who has been loved by a delicate, affectionate and ſenſible woman, and one endowed with exquiſite ſenſibility, has enjoyed the moſt delicious pleaſure which life affords.

Woman is leſs perſonal than man; ſhe ſpeaks leſs of herſelf than of her lover; man ſpeaks more of himſelf than of his amour, and of his amour than of his miſtreſs.

What greater happineſs can the imagination offer to a man than the ſociety of a being whoſe ambition is to pleaſe him, whoſe pleaſure is in a certain reſiſtance, and whoſe happineſs is in yielding, who

pretends to his eſteem by combating, and to his heart by defeat.

A woman among ſavages is a beaſt of burden, in the Eaſt a piece of furniture, and in Europe a ſpoiled child.

More women have fallen by vanity than by inclination and ſenſual deſires. In an intercourſe where perſonal advantages are to determine, rank, dignities and grandeur incline the balance. Succeſs may in general be expected with women by deſcending a degree: the prince with women of quality, and the lord with the wives of profeſſional men, or thoſe of financiers*. Women of ſenſibility are not ſeduced by theſe advantages.

There are women celebrated by their gallantry, who have never had an equal for a lover. A man of their own rank, with all the advantages of mind and per-

* The reader will kindly recollect that France is the ſcene of action. T.

ſon,

ſon, would in vain aſpire to pleaſe them: dignities, titles and decorations are neceſſary for the ſpeedy ruin of their reputation. A huſband ſaid to his wife, I permit you to intrigue with every body except princes and lackeys. He was right; the two extremes diſhonour by the ſcandal which accompanies them.

Men who hold great places, and thoſe who have diſtinguiſhed appointments in provinces, find many women leſs ſcrupulous than they would be to men of inferior rank. Vanity has its influence in every thing *, even in the moſt lively pleaſures: how greatly are the ſenſes of women indebted to this paſſion †.

I am

* Madame de Sevigne in ſpeaking to her daughter of her ſon's illneſs, which was the conſequence of an intimate connection with a lady whom he had ſeen *ſeated* with the queen, thus expreſſes herſelf; "but he is patient, and it is diverting enough that "the *canopy* ſhould ſpare him thoſe bluſhes, which, "had the misfortune happened upon the rampart, "would have covered him with confuſion."

† A great lady, at the age of ſixty, had an ob-

I am of opinion that women of gallantry may be thus appreciated. In a hundred there are ninety who are determined by ſplendour, exterior appearance, faſhion, intereſt, idleneſs, or the want of ſomething to engage their attention; ſix by ſenſibility, and four who are governed by imperious paſſions.

Praiſe, admire, be aſtoniſhed in ecſtaſy, and fear not to carry flattery and enthuſiaſm too far with women; make her, from whom you wiſh to obtain condeſcenſion believe, if you can, that ſhe is a particular being, nearer to an angel than to a woman. You will be believed—what do I ſay, you will not have created an illuſion as ſtrong as that of her ſelf-love, and nothing can be refuſed a man endowed with ſuch exquiſite diſcernment.

ſcure young man for her lover. She ſaid to one of her female friends: *a dutcheſs is never more than thirty years of age for a commoner*, and ſhe judged right.

How

How many ſtrange things does a woman, who had appeared reſerved, reveal to her lover when once ſhe has made him happy! How many times has ſhe been upon the point of yielding! What knowledge does ſhe poſſeſs of the moſt ſecret myſteries of love! She is no ſtranger even to the tongue of debauchery. Love is the whole employment, the ſole concern of woman. Nothing eſcapes their active and penetrating curioſity.

It ſeems to be permitted to treat women more lightly in proportion to their elevation. The woman in the city attaches more conſideration to polite attention, becauſe by her ſituation ſhe has leſs right to expect it. The rank of a woman of quality is too decided to leave her the leaſt inquietude upon that which is due to her. She receives pleaſure even from a momentary forgetfulneſs in others of who ſhe is, and this to her is another proof of the exceſs of paſſion and ardour of deſire.

There is a degree of diſorderly conduct and wickedneſs in gallantry, which can no where be met with but in the perſon of a woman of elevated rank. She knows that audacity aſtoniſhes, and that there is nothing which a woman of ſuperior underſtanding, added to high birth, may not riſk. But woe to the woman in the city who ſhould wiſh to follow her ſteps; ſhe would fall into the mire of public contempt.

Violent men ſubjugate women as ſoon as they have obtained their favours. Theſe love to be governed becauſe they have ſelf-love, which, joined to the timidity of their ſex, makes them find a certain pleaſure in the fear produced by new emotions; moreover, they attribute violence to an exceſs of paſſion. Thus they return to the ſituation wherein nature had placed them, in a ſubmiſſion to the will of man.

The ſureſt means of being loved by a woman is not to diſcover to her your whole

whole affection. She muſt be made to fear and deſire, and to believe ſhe has a rival which will excite her ſelf-love and make her hope for a triumph.

The moſt intimate friend of a woman is not half ſo much beloved as the confidant of her amour.

The ſoft intercourſe of a quarter of an hour between two perſons of different ſexes, and who have, I will not ſay an affection, but a mutual inclination for each other, eſtabliſhes a confidence and a tender intereſt which ten years of the warmeſt friendſhip has never yet produced.

In moſt connections, decorated with the name of love, the man is in general more ſincere than the woman, becauſe he has always deſires if he has not ſentiments. The woman frequently yields without one or the other.

Self-love is generally predominant in the inclinations of women, and phyſical ſenſations in the attachment of men.

Many falſehoods are related of women, but they have but a feeble compenſation in truths, which are unknown.

What woman can boaſt of the power of reſiſting the emotions of the ſenſes, and the inſtances of a man who is agreeable to her, added to opportunity. The moſt virtuous is ſhe who has not ceaſed to be ſo becauſe one of theſe circumſtances was wanting.

The moſt virtuous woman is favourably diſpoſed towards the man who is ſenſible of her beauty, and the greateſt hypocrite to thoſe whom ſhe leads into temptation *.

A ſecret

* Brantome relates, that a beautiful and virtuous woman, one day making her valet de chambre draw on her ſtocking, aſked him if he felt no temptation.

The

A ſecret defect is a ſure guarantee of virtue. The laſt degree of love is to love the defects of a miſtreſs.

It is not rare to find women who do not grant the leaſt favour, that of which love is the excuſe, and the value of mutual happineſs, but who procure pleaſures without partaking of them, and by which they are degraded*. They do worſe than if

The valet, from a motive of reſpect, anſwered in the negative. The lady ſuddenly lifted her hand and gave him a ſlap in the face: go, ſaid ſhe, I give you your diſmiſſion, you are no better than a fool.

It is reported, that a great princeſs of the laſt century was flattered by the deſires with which ſhe inſpired her pages, and gave them money to go and extinguiſh elſewhere the flame ſhe had created.

* Mademoiſelle de Vandôme behaved ſo to the cardinal de Retz, as the cardinal himſelf relates.

" I went with her to *Anet*. However, I did not " go to *every place*; ſhe had preſcribed herſelf bounds " which ſhe never would paſs. *I went very far*, but " was ſtopped in my courſe by her marriage.

MEMOIRS DE RETZ. tom. i. p. 73.

they

they did more, and think this gives no power over them.

The birth and rank of a woman, her connexions, acquaintance and magnificence, produce upon moſt men a greater effect than beauty; they miſtake the ſmoak of vanity for the flame of love.

Intereſt contains ſo active and ſubtil a poiſon, that affection, the moment it is joined to it, is corrupted, and at length extinguiſhed.

The ardour of ſentiment, be it ever ſo ſtrong, may be increaſed by fame, ſucceſs and celebrity.

There are women whoſe ſupineneſs and goodneſs of heart are incompatible with conſtant rigour. They have neither ſtrength to reſiſt nor courage to refuſe. It cannot be ſaid they yield; they ſuffer themſelves to be prevailed upon.

To

To ſeparate two metals, the intervention of a third, which has a greater affinity with one of the two, is neceſſary. The ſeparation of lovers is much upon the ſame principle. In general there is no complete rupture, but when another object has made an impreſſion either upon the lover or his miſtreſs.

It frequently happens that he who is in deſpair at the idea of loſing his miſtreſs, wants but little courage to enable him to leave her.

People in the country, and thoſe who know not the world, believe that all wanton women become ſo by their ſenſual paſſions, and that every man in place is open to pecuniary corruption.

The woman moſt intereſted in ſecreſy, paſſes lightly over indiſcretions produced by exceſs of paſſion.

That which ſhocks women moſt in the temerity of men, is the idea that their enterpriſes

terpriſes are determined by an opinion of their facility. But if paſſion be the excuſe, there is no audacity which a woman does not ſecretly pardon.

Wanton women are accuſtomed to defend their ground obſtinately; they know the value of every favour, and can ſtop when they pleaſe. A virtuous woman knows not how to calculate, and thinks herſelf conquered by the leaſt advantage gained over her.

A woman, wanton from coquetry, is accuſtomed to repel the leaſt approach of ſenſibility. She is envious, falſe, and hypocritical from the neceſſary habitude of deceitfulneſs. In a connexion wherein ſelf-love is the only ſentiment, its exploſion muſt produce tempeſts; nothing can contain a woman whoſe only deſire is ſucceſs, at the expence of every one about her.

The actor upon the theatre gives an idea of degradation, when we reflect that

that a man ceaſes to be himſelf, takes a character which is not natural to him, adopts ſentiments he does not feel, and becomes a machine for the amuſement of others. The coquette, like the actor, is in the habitude of changing her own character for one conformable to the momentary part ſhe has to fill. She can imitate the accents of paſſion, and act the violence of love and ecſtaſy; ſhe ſmiles without ſatisfaction, and ſhed tears without being affected; there is not a muſcle of her face of which ſhe knows not the effect, or cannot direct the movement. Vicious without excuſe; her vanity alone is gratified by the diſorder of her conduct; and although there be nothing real in her enjoyments, ſhe is inſatiable and knows not where to ſtop. She reſembles the tub of the Danaides.

There are fine women without celebrity, and others who are conſidered handſome without pretenſions to beauty. Every thing depends upon their manner of

of entering the world, and upon the part they have taken up.

CHARACTER OF A WOMAN WITHOUT PRETENSIONS.

ISMENE is an extraordinary beauty; her figure is noble, candour is painted in her countenance, and grace and ſimplicity reign in her manners and perſon. The birth of Iſmene, and her riches, joined to ſo many natural advantages, ſeem likely to engage general attention. Nobody ſpeaks of the beauty of Iſmene or praiſes her charms; you find her in a circle and are ſurpriſed ſhe is not diſtinguiſhed: you compare her with thoſe who are the general ſubjects of converſation. How many celebrated women you naturally exclaim, are inferior to her. Iſmene loves

loves her huſband, and is attached to her duty; ſhe partakes with moderation of the amuſements proper to her ſex and age, and follows the faſhions without being ridiculous. She has no lover, becauſe the moſt audacious would deſpair of corrupting her. Iſmene has never hung out the ſign of beauty, and beauty itſelf is not ſucceſsful without being announced, accompanied with fawning and pretenſions.

GLYCERA is the object of ardour to the moſt faſhionable young men. When a pretty woman is ſpoken of, her name is immediately mentioned. If a ſupper be announced, notice is given that ſhe will be there. If a young man begins the world with great advantages, it is to Glycera that his ſecret wiſhes are directed. If a ball or breakfaſt be propoſed, Glycera has a week's previous invitation. In fact, theſe parties are made for her. Who is that woman ſeen on horſeback at Vincennes, ſurrounded by Engliſh or French, bent after the manner

ner of the Engliſh upon their horſes? It is Glycera; or at the Champs Eliſées, in ſo elegant a carriage, and accompanied by young men of the greateſt diſtinction, anxious to be perceived by her, and who think themſelves honoured by a glance of her eye? It is ſtill Glycera. Artiſts ſeem to have ſtriven who ſhould multiply her moſt. She figures at the exhibition in portraits, buſts, and medallions. She daily receives charming verſes expreſſive of the homage of their author. You, perhaps, have never ſeen this celebrated lady, and may ſuppoſe her charms to ſurpaſs thoſe of every woman with whom you are acquainted. At laſt you meet her; ſhe is not handſome, but it muſt be confeſſed ſhe is pretty; ſhe is not young, ſhe verges upon her fortieth year. There is nothing remarkable in her figure, it has ſome defects, even her underſtanding is not above mediocrity. Glycera was determined to be handſome, ſpoken of, and celebrated; her dreſs is elegant, ſhe gives hopes, throws out allurements and heightens deſire. Twenty years ago ſhe made herſelf a handſome

handſome woman without beauty, as a man conſtitutes himſelf a wit without the aid of underſtanding, by a little art and much addreſs.

A woman who is wanton from a tenderneſs of heart, or the ardour of the ſenſes, yields to the impulſion of nature. She has an end to attain. She may have openneſs of mind, and her ſentiments may be real. She feels imperious deſires, and the moment theſe are ſatisfied, ſhe enjoys the fulneſs of real happineſs. Her whole attention being directed to one object, ſhe may feel the inquietude of jealouſy, but not the torments of envy; ſuch a woman may be good, eaſy, and indulgent, and the ſenſibility of her heart may conciliate love and friendſhip.

Believe every thing, and believe nothing about the virtue of women. If you are told that the lively Doris, who gives herſelf ſuch airs of levity, has never had a lover, be not ſurpriſed; a thouſand examples would confirm it. You are informed

formed that Beliſa, whoſe manner is ſo modeſt, and whom the tongue of calumny has hitherto ſpared, is decidedly wanton; that an obſcure man, her houſe ſteward, her valet de chambre——Be not in haſte to cry out ſcandal.

HERMIONE is every where ſurrounded by adorers; each is anxious to be more happy than his rivals; ſhe is prodigal of her allurements, to retain ſome and encourage others. A lover favoured in appearance ſoon finds himſelf no better treated than another who was in deſpair. Hermione, it is ſaid, loves not any body; ſhe is a coquette, who has no ſenſations nor deſires. You are deceived, ye adorers of Hermione: ſhe loves; but whom? ſay you; is it young Theodore, whoſe youth and perſon ſeem to preſage ſucceſs? or Alcidon every where well received, and ſo celebrated by ſeveral well known adventures? or Miramis, whoſe wit ſupplies the want of birth and perſon, whoſe acquaintance does honour to a woman, and ſeems to rank her with Aſpaſia? or——

ſtop;

ſtop;—not one of them, nor of thoſe you can mention———He is a man without the leaſt advantage of mind or perſon, who is not young, but whoſe conſtitution is robuſt. It is on his account that ſhe but ſeldom ſups from home, and when this happens that ſhe retires early; it is with him ſhe laughs at her followers, at the hopes of rivals, &c.——It is —— you are impatient——her huſband.

DORANTE is jealous and watches his wife. He finds her in converſation with a young man whoſe polite attentions give him ſuſpicion. He aſks the porter if his wife was that day at home to her friends, and the man ſhews him a liſt of ten perſons to whom ſhe was not to be denied. Is it poſſible that Dorante ſhould now be uneaſy?—He does not know that theſe people are ſome of them at Verſailles, others in the country, and the reſt ill, or had been at his houſe the preceding evening, and not likely to repeat their viſits ſo ſoon. This is an old trick which always ſucceeds.

A woman, warm in her friendſhips, has the appearance of a woman of gallantry, yet it ſometimes happens that ſhe has never known what it is to love.

Goodneſs of heart, and mediocrity of perſon and underſtanding, may preſerve a woman from detraction and calumny, and conduct her through a life of pleaſure to a reſpectable old age.

Melitia, in her youth, often heard ſpeak of love; curioſity inclined her to a perſonal experience of the charms of that paſſion, and from indolence ſhe quickly yielded to the firſt advances that were made her. She ſoon found herſelf abandoned, but did not on this account give herſelf up to the violence of rage; ſhe took another lover with the ſame indifference as ſhe would have changed her gown. From the habitude of gallantry, ſhe took a third and a fourth; the ſucceſſion afterwards became ſo rapid that ſhe counted them no longer. Jealouſy never made ſo mild

mild and peaceable a woman commit an imprudence. Her letters were never ſhewn becauſe ſhe wrote badly; moreover a correſpondence was not altogether compatible with her indolence. She never let her lovers languiſh, which was the moſt certain means of obtaining her end without being expoſed. Her quarrels were never public; and thirty lovers, who had quitted her, remembered her with pleaſure; they ſtill ſhewed her an attachment and formed her a circle of friends. They were never inclined to boaſt of her favours, nor excited to cenſure her from a reſentment of her proceedings. Each knew the agreeable facility of her virtue. Melitia was never the ſubject of public converſation, becauſe all her adventures were private. The ſucceſſion of her lovers was ſo rapid that her huſband had never time to fix his ſuſpicions: he believed her virtue to be unſpotted. Thus did Melitia paſs twenty years in the pleaſures of love without injuring her reputation, and the moſt ſcrupulous mother left her daughters in her company.

ELVIRA is now in the fifty-firſt year of her age. Her life, until within theſe few years, has been a chain of amorous adventures, but lately ſhe has been forſaken, and is at preſent overwhelmed with languor.

All her reſentment conſiſts in ſaying, that men are no longer polite. What lover will take Elvira? Will ſhe become a tutoreſs and amuſe herſelf in forming a young man honoured by her choice of him? Will ſhe hold him in her chains by preſents? No—Elvira is attached to a man of ſeventy-five, who has paſſed ſixty years of his life in intrigue, in taking and leaving women, and being left by them. They have taken a little houſe, to which this amorous couple nightly repair with the greateſt myſtery. Two chairmen carry the heavy dowager, and two others ſupport the gallant invalid. In this manner they arrive in an enchanted cloſet. What pleaſure has Elvira? The moſt flattering one to her, that of becoming young again, and of being treated by her old man as a giddy

giddy young girl. What a child you are, ſays he to her, let me ſee no more of your follies!—She then repeats her childiſh manners. Elvira is ruining herſelf for this lover, and yet thinks ſhe pays not too dear for the ſhadow of her happy days.

It is difficult to imagine what qualities are moſt proper to gain a man the favours of women. It ſeems, upon firſt conſideration, that agreeableneſs of perſon, wit, and exterior advantages, are moſt likely to be ſucceſsful; but ſeveral men have diſtinguiſhed themſelves in this painful and brilliant career without being remarkable either for their perſon or underſtanding *.

There

* The duke of Lauzun was ſhort and ugly, yet no man was ever more famous in gallantry either by the rank or number of his conqueſts. The queen of Portugal and her ſiſter mademoiſelle d'Aumale, equally ſmitten with the duke, caſt lots which ſhould marry him. They agreed, that to give him a conſiderable fortune, ſhe to whom the iſſue ſhould be unfavourable,

There is ſcarcely a romance which has not been more or leſs prejudicial to morals, by ſeducing deſcriptions and charms of ſtyle.

In admiring the wit and ſtyle of ſome authors of novels, we cannot but regret the uſe they have made of their talents. With what art and addreſs for ſeduction does Richardſon arm Lovelace! Of what lively imagination does he give proofs! What reſources! In what a labyrinth of intrigue does he engage his hero, and how ably does he withdraw him from it! But to what end are all theſe powers directed?

favourable, ſhould take the veil, and give her whole property to the other. There is, perhaps, nothing more flattering in the annals of gallantry. Mademoiſelle, ſiſter to the king of France, wiſhed to marry him publicly, and this paſſion, by its ardour, added to the ſubſequent coldneſs of her lover, rendered her life unhappy. The duke of Lauzun had received the favours of women whom he had diſputed with the king. Mademoiſelle agreed that he wrote inelegantly, but always concluded by obſerving, that his manner was very *extraordinary*; this it ſeems is what pleaſed her moſt in her lover.

To

To conduct a war? To determine the fate of a nation, or balance the intereſt of a quarter of the world? By no means. What then?——To ſeduce a young girl and bring her by degrees to yield to his deſires, which he knows how to command, and render ſubordinate to the caprice of ſelf-love. It is in vain to pretend that ſuch a work, or thoſe of the ſame kind, generally very inferior to Clariſſa in talent and imagination, have a moral tendency, although concluded by a cataſtrophe which is the puniſhment of the ſeduction and crime. The heroes of vice are preſented throughout the whole work with ſuch brilliancy of colouring, they unite ſo many advantages and are crowned with ſuch flattering ſucceſs, as to create an intereſt much in their favour. The writer furniſhes them with pleaſantries upon virtue which render it ridiculous; their deſcriptions heat the imagination, inflame the ſenſes, and fill virtuous perſons even with the moſt romantic ideas, which they ſtrive to realize. Young perſons ſtruck with the rare qualities of Lovelace

are

are more ſeduced by the brilliancy of his ſucceſs than intimidated by his tragical end: Women perſuade themſelves they ſhall make a better choice than Clariſſa, and be able to ſtop upon the brink of the precipice. Women have as much charity for the heroine of romance as certain perſons for the vices and weakneſſes of great men, and becauſe there is ſome reſemblance in the deformed part of their mind, they think the compariſon may be general. In reading the conſpiracy againſt Venice, we are, without interiorly acknowledging it, in ſome meaſure diſpoſed to wiſh that magnificent city may be burned, and the citizens maſſacred, becauſe the mind regrets the failure of well-concerted meaſures, and the ſacrifice of ſuch brave conſpirators. The greateſt villains in gallantry have alſo ſomething which intereſts in their favour; we ſee not the misfortunes of their victims as we loſe ſight of the conflagration of Venice. The mind of the reader is moſt ſtruck with the boldneſs of the enterprize, the difficulties of the conqueſt, and the ability

ability of the ſeducer. What a deſirable end for ſelf-love is that which in gallantry it calls conqueſt! A woman is either invaluable or not worthy of more conſideration than a thouſand others. Perhaps no woman is invincible when an artful man, who never loſes ſight of his object, and is ſeconded by opportunity, ſurrounds her with ſnares. Self-love and the ſenſes combat on his ſide, and he beſieges a place betrayed by the governor and the troops. Is it worth while to deſcend to falſehood, to exhauſt the imagination in combining projects of deceit, and to employ time which is precious, to obtain, after a thouſand attacks, the favours of a woman whom we do not love?

The imagination of women once raiſed by the publication of an adventure, inclines them to a man without merit. Afterwards, like a ſtatuary, they throw incenſe upon the idol they have created.

There are ſome kinds of perſons loſt in ſociety, like certain ſpecies of fiſh, which, after

after having abounded on the coaſts, diſappear for centuries. In fact, there are no longer thoſe fops, thoſe tranſcendant coxcombs which always took the lead, gave laws upon dreſs and faſhion, ſubjugated women, and awed men to ſilence by audacity and ſucceſs, and whoſe manners youth in general were ſo eager to copy. Such were Vardes and Lauzun. There is a fatuity in men becauſe preſumption more or leſs predominates. But the coxcomb in one ſociety is often a modeſt man in another; to perform this part in a diſtinguiſhed manner, he muſt have exterior advantages united to wit and imprudence, and a certain degree of rank. However vicious the employment of the talents of coxcombs may be, there are certainly ſtill many of them; but models of this kind, as well as of many others, are wanting.

Men of gallantry by profeſſion begin to be out of faſhion; the extreme liberty of ſociety, which makes obſtacles diſappear, diminiſhes the ardour of deſire and the value of the conqueſt. It weakens the deſire

deſire of pleaſing and deſtroys gallantry. Young men who enter the world, ſeduced by the reading of novels, and excited by the recital of the amorous adventures of the preceding generation, are anxious to try their merit by ſome enterprize. Indolence ſoon retains them in the ſame chains which habitude ſtrengthens; there are many connexions wherein nothing of marriage is wanting, not even the languor of an uniform life. There are fewer balls, entertainments, and occaſions proper to awaken vanity and offer it triumphs. A taſte for eaſy pleaſures ſtill contributes to deprive women of a crowd of adorers.

Polydor is famous for his brilliant adventures, and, in ſome ſocieties, he is called Lovelace; for each quarter of the town has its petty Lovelace. Two women have been confined on his account, and they expiate in a convent the pleaſure of having been the objects of his attention. This may give a favourable idea of his agreeableneſs and figure. The other day I met this

this famous conqueror; his perſon is ordinary, and his converſation moſt inſipid. What then is the principle of his ſucceſs? He addreſſed himſelf either by accident or deſign to two weak heads, which the leaſt effort was ſufficient to turn; he profited by their indolence and want of circumſpection, and a thouſand others in his place would have had this calamitous and ſcandalous advantage. Polydor is in gallantry what a man who ſhould inſult known cowards would be in bravery; but he has diſhonoured two women, and his conqueſt will tempt others who are ſeduced by the brilliancy of his ſucceſs.

Gallantry to love is as politeneſs to ſocial virtues, its imitation and ſupplement.

Women, who are paſt the age of pleaſing, know not how to fill up the void they feel in their pleaſures. Their imagination is obſcured by the vapours which ariſe

ariſe from inactivity of mind and the languor of the ſoul *.

* It has been remarked that, at a certain age, more women of the great world periſh than in any of the inferior claſſes. The reaſon undoubtedly is, that in the former the natural change in the conſtitution is joined to the bitter mortification of being no longer loved, and to all the laſſitude of an indolent life.

DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

A PHYSICIAN AND A LADY.

PHYSICIAN.

AS far as I can judge, madam, by your manner, dreſs, and language, you are rich, of diſtinguiſhed rank, and have lived in the great world.

LADY.

Yes, Sir.

PHYSICIAN.

You appear to be about thirty-eight years of age?

LADY.

Thereabout.

PHYSICIAN.

I am not particular about age, becauſe I do not recollect ever to have ſeen a woman exactly forty years old.

LADY *(with a ſmile.)*

I am not far off.

PHYSICIAN.

As it is neceſſary I ſhould be perfectly well informed of your ſituation, you muſt acquaint me with every thing, that I may judge of what affects you moſt. You are married without doubt?

LADY.

I was married at ſixteen.

PHYSICIAN.

Your huſband, madam, excuſe my curioſity, does he live happily with you? Are

Are you miſtreſs of the houſe, as I imagine by your eyes and the independence which appears in your manner?

LADY.

We have always lived peacefully together, and my huſband treats me with complacency, as I do him.

PHYSICIAN.

I underſtand; I know what the complaiſance of a Pariſian huſband means. It is his ſubjection, and frequently his being a cypher.

LADY.

You carry things too far, ſir.

PHYSICIAN.

Have you children? and how old are they?

LADY.

I have a daughter fifteen years of age, and a ſon fourteen.

PHYSICIAN.

I ſuppoſe your daughter is in a convent, your ſon at an academy, and that you ſee them but ſeldom, diſſipated as you are by the pleaſures and duties of ſociety.

LADY.

I love them; but, it is true, I do not often ſend for them home, for fear of injuring their education.

PHYSICIAN.

At preſent, madam, I am ready to hearken to the particulars of your complaint.

LADY.

You muſt know, ſir, that my nerves were always delicate, and ſubject to the moſt violent agitation. For the laſt two or three years they have become more irritable, and I am overwhelmed with vapours. I ſhed tears, I know not for why, and feel myſelf interiorly ſuffocated. I

do

do not ſleep well, and my digeſtion is bad.——

PHYSICIAN.

In ſuch a ſtate, madam, you muſt feel a void, a languor, which renders thoſe things inſipid which formerly pleaſed you moſt.

LADY.

Exactly ſo, ſir.

PHYSICIAN.

Society has no longer the ſame charms; the vapours tarniſh every object.

LADY.

Vapours apart, ſir, there is not in ſociety that decency and animation, that gallantry, which, although not very old, I have formerly ſeen in men. It ſeems that manners are quite changed, and at preſent nothing is more rare than politeneſs, even in people of the moſt diſtinguiſhed rank.

PHYSICIAN.

You would ſurpriſe me, madam, were I not accuſtomed to the diverſity of opinions, and to conſider the cauſe. A few days ago I ſaw a lady who came from Paris, and boaſted of the charms of ſociety, the excellence of the ton which reigns there, and of the wit, manners, and politeneſs of the men.

LADY.

Some giddy young woman who has not yet had time to form her judgment, and, for want of experience, is delighted with every thing ſhe ſees.

PHYSICIAN.

I ſuppoſe, madam, you have been adviſed to go to Spa?

LADY.

Yes: I drank the waters two ſeaſons without effect, and am now determined to travel.

PHYSICIAN.

There is one neceſſary and important queſtion which greatly embarraſſes me. You will excuſe the liberty, madam—— You have undoubtedly a ſuſceptible heart?

LADY.

I underſtand you, ſir——you ſee me familiar with Mr. ————, and you think————

PHYSICIAN.

No, madam, Mr. ——— is your friend, that is all, I immediately perceived it.—— You have undoubtedly had attachments of another kind? I pretend not to ſuſpect your virtue, but we are not always maſters of our heart.

LADY *(ſmiling.)*

Well, ſir, I leave all to you: ſince you are ſo penetrating, conclude in what manner you pleaſe.

PHY-

PHYSICIAN.

I obſerve, madam, that your countenance is become enlivened, and your complexion more bright.

LADY *(with an air of modeſty.)*

Your queſtions may well produce ſurpriſe and emotion. But, finally, what think you of my ſituation?

PHYSICIAN.

I think, madam, I have diſcovered your complaint.

LADY *(with vivacity.)*

Has it a name?

PHYSICIAN.

Yes, madam, I have given it one—That of forty years; becauſe, at this age, it generally appears accompanied with the ſame ſymptoms; it attacks rich women, they who have lived in the great world, and more eſpecially the beautiful and agreeable.

You

You know, madam, there are complaints particular to every ſtate and profeſſion, to painters, pewterers——

LADY.

But do you cure this complaint of mine?

PHYSICIAN.

Diſcovering the cauſe and the ſymptoms is doing a great deal, were it only to prevent the taking of medicines. I can almoſt promiſe you a cure, provided you will make uſe of your reaſon; be patient and ſuffer me to direct you. No ſtate is ſo cruel as that of uncertainty, in this ſituation we are conſtantly between hope and fear. Forget the paſt, conſider the future reſources, ſubſtitute permanent deſires, eaſy to be ſatisfied, to paſſions which diſturb the mind without attaining their object.—Collect yourſelf, depend leſs upon exterior objects, and be more attached to knowing than feeling. Diſtinguiſh vanity from what is called ſentiment, that you may have leſs conſideration for the latter.

Conſider

Conſider that our attachments are but an employment of time, and may be replaced by any other occupation; finally, endeavour to find in public conſideration a recompence for momentary and frivolous ſucceſs. Theſe, madam, are in general the means of cure I have to offer you. A lady who has been left by her lover, and is in a moſt frightful ſtate of mind, now waits for me. In our firſt conference I will adminiſter to you the general remedies I have indicated.

There is a degree of love which inſpires an unbounded confidence, incompatible with jealouſy, in the object beloved.

Reaſon can do nothing againſt ſentiment. Hence it is that the common place expreſſions of love, repeated for two thouſand years with proteſtations and oaths, always

always produce effect. A woman in love will always tremble for fear her lover, in a moment of despair, should stab himself in her presence.

In youth we love with all our might, in age with all our weakness.

OF A MAN REALLY IN LOVE.

A MAN really in love is leſs enterpriſing than he who ſeeks but to ſatisfy his vanity or deſires. The reaſon of this is not difficult to perceive. It is neceſſary to know the nature only of the ſentiment by which he is animated. Love reigns in the ſoul, heart and ſenſes; it is the dominion of an object over all our faculties, and conſiſts in an excluſive preference taken by ſurpriſe rather than given. He who is really ſmitten knows not what pleaſes him moſt in the perſon he loves: there is nothing which he diſtinguiſhes in his affection. He loves before he knows or even ſuppoſes it; it is the confuſion and diſorder excited by the preſence of the beloved object, rather than his deſires, that diſcovers the empire of the blind deity. The mind of a lover is abſorbed and almoſt extinguiſhed by ſentiment.

His

His thoughts and expreſſions come not thence, but from the ſoul. All his movements are confuſed. He faulters, ſtops, is ſilent, and reddens, as when excited by immoderate anger. Such is the character of love.

> And in the ſoft tranſports wherein his ſoul is loſt,
> He can find neither language nor voice.

He who wiſhes to ſeduce has but one aim. He ſees the woman he deſires, as a ſportſman does his game. He watches her motions, and follows her through all her windings; he ſeizes a moment of weakneſs, triumphs, and often inſolently enjoys his victory. Love, as I have obſerved, reigns in the ſoul, and fills the heart with tenderneſs. The property of this ſentiment is to intereſt him who feels it in the happineſs of another. Therefore the moſt trifling reſiſtance is ſufficient to alarm him whom love has ſubdued; he thinks he is going to loſe for ever the object of his affection. The ſoul has a thouſand enjoyments which retard and ſuſpend

ſuſpend deſires. The woman whom we love has a thouſand favours to grant, each of which is ineſtimable. A man aſpires to the entire poſſeſſion of ſuch a woman, but wiſhes to enjoy only her whom he deſires, and has always ſufficient preſence of mind to profit by a favourable moment. When we love we are no longer maſters of ourſelves: every thing betrays us, becauſe there are no bounds to our uneaſineſs and inquietude. Hence comes the difficulty of concealing a riſing paſſion, and that awkwardneſs, timidity, and embarraſſment by which it is accompanied. The man who is paſſionately in love knows not what he moſt deſires: he is like a houſe covered with flames; nobody knows where to begin, in preference, to extinguiſh the fire. He cannot be happy alone, he ſeeks neither to triumph nor enjoy, but to confound his exiſtence with that of the woman he loves. One inſtant, one deſire muſt unite them, and in ſome degree they muſt find themſelves at the pinnacle of happineſs without having foreſeen it.

By what means can we be certain that we are really loved? Moſt of the ſymptoms of love are equivocal. Your lover is jealous, Hortenſia. Self-love is ſufficient to excite all the furies of jealouſy. You perceive no abatement in his deſires. Hence it may be concluded that his paſſions are ſtrong. He is conſtantly with you. The power of habitude may determine his aſſiduity. His eyes are ſuffuſed with tears when he ſpeaks to you of his tenderneſs. Good actors can ſhed them in abundance. His letters are full of ſentiment and warmth of expreſſion. The contents of thoſe of poets and novel writers ſeem to burn the paper. There is perhaps one means of judging of the truth of his ſentiments. In your long converſations, does he ſpeak more of you than of himſelf?

The imagination of many perſons, eſpecially of women, performs the functions of the heart and phyſical ſenſes; their heads are heated with the idea of an object, whilſt their tormented ſenſes are ſtill, and their cold and empty heart feels no tenderneſs.

This falſe paſſion may be durable by the aid of habitude.

Nothing is more flattering and affecting, to a man in love, than the combat of ſentiment and modeſty.

He who loves without a return of affection is the moſt certain of loving truly.

A man paſſes all his time with his miſtreſs—his wife dies; he is looked upon as happy in being at liberty to purſue his inclination, and having the power of uniting himſelf to the object of his affections. But if this man, who is accuſtomed to go from home every day at four o'clock, ſhould marry his miſtreſs, where then will he have to go to at that hour?

FRAGMENT OF A LETTER.

YOU pretend it is difficult to know me; yet I have always preſented myſelf to you ſuch as I really am, and it is your own fault if you have not been able to ſee into my heart. I am, ſay you, an enigma; be it ſo: the word of this enigma is *woman*; I am, indeed, a true one. I have a lively imagination, but little ardour of ſentiment; a heart ſuſceptible of tranſient emotions, and a great deal of ſelf-love and vanity. With this clew you will find all my ſecret receſſes. I have reflected conſiderably, notwithſtanding my natural air of levity, which I ſometimes carry too far. I have endeavoured to diſcover what paſſes in the hearts of other women; and thoſe who have had the moſt adventures, have confeſſed to me, they had uſed every means to excite their paſſions; that they had enjoyed but the ſhadow of pleaſure, and that in the continual purſuit of it they had loſt

themſelves, like thoſe who ſeek the philoſopher's ſtone, and are ruined by the expence of their experiments. According to my reflections, I thought I ſhould fully gratify my ſelf-love in conceiving no more affection than what was flattering to it; I have always had ſuppliants, but never inſolent ſubduers. I give them a ray of hope to ſupport them in their painful undertaking of loving me. Each thinks himſelf more ſkilful and happy than his rival; but I eſcape from them, like Protheus, in the moment they expect triumph. I will not conceal from you that, notwithſtanding my reflections and able manœuvres, I have been twice upon the point of yielding. I felt in two private converſations certain emotions which, however, were not turned to my diſadvantage. They were tranſient as a meteor, and I had the pleaſure of being revenged for the want of addreſs in my lovers as well as for the power they thought they had acquired over me. Theſe are vain pleaſures you will ſay; but, my dear friend, take vanity from the world and what will remain in it? I maintain, that

that nothing, except hunger, animates men more than vanity. It is a principle a thouſand times more active and prolific than love. A few perſons, during a ſhort period of their lives, are amuſed by the latter for ſome minutes in the day; but as ſoon as an infant can ſpeak, he wiſhes to produce effect; he will be thought of, and aſpires to gain attention. Every hour in the day, at every period of life, both men and women yield to this imperious ſentiment. What are the pretenſions of heroes, warriors, and miniſters, but to gain the attention of men, to be the ſubjects of converſation throughout a quarter of the world; to hold thoſe who approach them in a ſtate of dependance, and to produce great effects when they make their appearance; finally, to ſee men anxious to ſerve them, and to anticipate their deſires? I often ſay to myſelf on entering the theatre, when my fine complexion, eyes, and figure, with the elegance of my dreſs, excite general attention; when men and women turn towards me, I ſay, on hearing a buzzing of applauſe, that I have

more power than the moſt important perſonages over all who are here; they may be munificent, but their empire is not ſo great as mine. Theſe act upon the mind only, but the heart and ſenſes are under my dominion. In diſgrace their power ceaſes: their influence is but borrowed: mine is inſeparable from my perſon; the idea of the happineſs I can confer cannot be taken from me. Tell me, if I am wrong, in imitating the manner of heroes and miniſters, in having, without difficulty, that which coſts them years of anxiety, and deprives them of ſo much repoſe; leſt, in an unfortunate moment, they ſhould be entirely deprived of it? I have been inoculated, no event can deprive me of my place, and I have twelve years certain for the exerciſe of all my influence. You believe in conſtancy, and prefer, to all theſe vain pleaſures, the charm of a laſting ſentiment. But is there one which can continue for a conſiderable length of time with all its primitive ardour? Real love is a diſeaſe which has ſeveral ſtages: deſire, poſſeſſion, and ſatiety; theſe are its three epochas. In vain do

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we wiſh to be conſtantly attached to the ſame object. Men are led by curioſity and habitude. One is a ſteady, the other an inconſtant lover. Some are active, others indolent. Conſtant lovers are men of habitude. A flattering attachment, if that which proceeds from ſlothfulneſs can be ſo. If lovers, who are admired for their ſteady affection, told you what languor they feel, and how inſipid are their enjoyments, you would be diſguſted with conſtancy. Love is extinguiſhed in their hearts, and they are more attached to the apartment of their miſtreſs, to a certain kind of life, and the manner of employing their time, than to the perſon whom they ſeem to love. A profound ſentiment, ardent and laſting, is a chimera. How is it poſſible to find that perſon always amiable who is conſtantly before our eyes, or to be amuſed by a converſation which we ſoon have learned by heart? The moſt tickliſh perſons are inſenſible to the touch of their own hands, becauſe they are habituated to them. Can we command our ſenſes to be inceſſantly awakened by the approach

of the ſame object? A lively and excluſive ſentiment, which abſorbs the mind and the ſenſes, is the conſequence of ſolitude, which concentrates the mind; of calmneſs which gives time to feel laſting impreſſion. Finally, of the rarity of amiable objects which excludes compariſon. Can ſuch a ſentiment exiſt in a great city or in a court? An immenſe capital offers a rapid ſucceſſion of objects which prevents profound impreſſions; every thing which engages attention wears a ſeducing aſpect; a thouſand beauties diſpute each other the preference: men are allured by every thing which is the moſt attracting, and facility of ſucceſs diminiſhes the ardour of deſire. They are irreſolute, and wander from object to object; the effect of beauty is deſtroyed by that of pleaſing grace, and this in its turn by that which is bewitching; they compare, heſitate, and have not time to chuſe; they wiſh to poſſeſs every woman, and love not even one. Men are at balls, comedies, and in ſociety, as in ſhops, where a hundred pieces of ſilk are diſplayed to view; they know not which to

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prefer. You may perceive, that notwithſtanding my levity, I have reflected a good deal. I have done more, I have judged, and, for my own happineſs, I will depend upon the ſucceſs of my ſelf-love. I take pleaſure in making men feel the torments of Tantalus. It was for ſome time believed that I was wanton: at preſent the world does me more juſtice, and the man, whom I ſeem to diſtinguiſh, cannot be a coxcomb at my expence. Adieu, my dear friend, be not uneaſy on my account. When my youth is paſt, I ſhall be like a miniſter in diſgrace, with the additional reſources of wit, intrigue, and devotion.

Of the Mind of Women.

IT appears that women have not ſtrength enough of mind to attach themſelves to things only. They generally join to them a ſenſible object. Their love or hatred of perſons determines their actions, and is joined to all their intereſts. They attribute not the want of ſucceſs, in an affair, to circumſtances and natural obſtacles, but to ſome perſon directly or indirectly concerned. Things pleaſe them on account of thoſe from whom they come. Prejudice and ardour reign in all their ſentiments and actions. The principal objects of their converſation are perſons: they ſpeak leſs of men in general than of one man in particular, whom they analize and define with aſtoniſhing ſagacity. When a woman is ſolicited for her intereſt and ſupport in favour of an undertaking, ſhe muſt by no means be told of the obſtacles which ariſe from the nature of the thing,

or

or the ſtate of affairs. The great art is in profiting by her diſpoſition to love and hatred; in perſuading her that every obſtacle proceeds from the oppoſition of a man in place. In this caſe a woman acts with vigour and conſtancy; ſhe will not hearken to reaſons, but is ſtimulated in proportion to the difficulties ſhe has to encounter; ſimple concern becomes a paſſion, and the ſucceſs of the affair is no longer doubtful.

You have a great law ſuit, Dorilas, wherein your fortune and honour are at ſtake. Juſtice, you ſay, is on your ſide; your right is ſo clear that you fear not your adverſary. Let us not ſpeak of your right and title. I know the circumſtances of your caſe; it is more than doubtful; the ſtrongeſt appearances are againſt you; how do you ſtand with the enthuſiaſtic Argyra, who has a legion at her command, and whoſe heads ſhe inflames?—with the circumſpect and ambitious Belinda, who ſo artfully determines the judgment of ſeveral perſons in power?——with the cold

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and made up Celimene, who, with an affected warmth, diſplays ſuch great ſentiments, and whoſe lover has at his orders ten young men who adopt his judgments and revere his deciſions—or with Dorinda, whoſe acquaintance is ſo numerous, and who in the evening relates, in ten different houſes, the hiſtory of the day, which ſhe embelliſhes at will, and not unfrequently compoſes? In this manner, Dorilas, is public opinion formed. Its influence extends to the judges, to thoſe even of the greateſt integrity, whoſe diſcernment is obſcured by the cloud of general prejudice. Plead and print with theſe ſupports; every body will be impatient to read your memoirs, and he who ſhall dare to doubt of the juſtice of your cauſe, or be leſs warm in your favour than theſe irritable perſons whoſe intereſt is ſo powerful, will be declared a man without principles. People muſt declare for you, it will not only be faſhionable in the eyes of the world but neceſſary to their ſafety.

Imagination is the reigning principle in the mind of women. For which reaſon their dictionary is more extenſive than that of men. They find relations between the moſt diſtant objects. Their compariſons are lively and ſtriking, and render the moſt abſtruſe things ſenſible.

Women ſeldom ſearch for cauſes, but predict effects in a prophetical manner. Their fine and delicate conception of mind makes them perceive many circumſtances which inſure or prevent ſucceſs.

The ſcience of morality is that in which their mind is exerciſed with the greateſt advantage. They are acquainted both by ſagacity and experience with the weakneſſes of the heart. That of man is their domain. The moſt ſecret pretenſions cannot eſcape them; ſelf-love and vanity have no receſſes beyond the reach of their penetration. For which reaſon they diſcover and expoſe to view the moſt ſecret foibles; but they diſcern merit with equal ability. A man of mediocrity ought to tremble when

when he appears before a ſenſible woman.

There is in general but little order in the ideas of women. They ſee objects under different points of view, and know how to adorn their different aſpects with the moſt brilliant colours. The wit of the moſt celebrated of the ſex ſometimes reſembles the magic lanthorn; hence a certain diſorder, obſervable in the mind of women of ſuperior underſtanding, which preſents the idea of folly.

PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN OF SUPERIOR WIT AND UNDERSTANDING *.

ELMIRA has, to a ſuperior degree, the gift of thinking, the moſt lively conception, the moſt penetrating ſagacity, and brilliant imagination are the reigning qualities of her mind. Thought ſeems to be the eſſence of Elmira, wholly deſtined to the exerciſe of the intellectual faculties. I will not undertake to point out what belongs to her character, or to deſcribe the qualities of her heart: theſe diviſions of a thinking and ſenſible being exiſt not in her: wit alone conſtitutes her heart, mind, character, and ſenſes. Madame de Tencin ſaid one day to Fontenelle, in putting her hand upon his heart, *they are brains which lie there.* All the actions and ſentiments of

* This is the only portrait in the work, and is advantageous to the lady. She died a few years ago.

Elmira

Elmira may be called imagination. Every thing with her is ſubmitted to the thought of the moment: if her imagination deſcribes the charms of love, ſhe feels this paſſion, and her mind, which in an inſtant decorates an object with the moſt brilliant qualities, ſeems to create her a heart and affections. The ſame active, reſtleſs mind, deſirous of a general and perfect knowledge of every thing, deſtroys its own work; the magical charm diſappears and ſhe immediately becomes inconſtant. She is ſuſceptible of all the errors of youth, becauſe her mind has never been matured, and yet compoſes her whole being; it has the moſt rapid movements, and its firſt flight is like an arrow ſwiftly ſhot from a bow, and which ſpeedily reaches the moſt diſtant mark. Elmira has but little information, and is incapable of ſolid reflection; all her thoughts are momentary, never retroſpective, nor relative to the future. Her life is a long youth, unenlightened by experience; her mind reſembles the chariot of the ſun abandoned by Phaeton. Her lively penetration ſerves

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her inſtead of knowledge, becauſe by it ſhe ſpeedily poſſeſſes herſelf of that which exerciſes the attention of others. She turns over rather than reads a book, and gueſſes rather than learns. She is acquainted with every thing, her conception is ſo lively. The moſt abſtracted ideas enter her mind with the ſame facility as the ſimpleſt notions. Her brilliant imagination gives her the power of deſcribing every object, and compoſes her a particular dictionary. She ſpeaks in ſuch a manner as gives to every thing ſhe ſays an expreſſive and a deſcriptive character. Her converſation is animated, and mixed with brilliant thoughts, juſt definitions, and ingenious compariſons. She is better to hear than converſe with, having no deſire to diſtinguiſh herſelf; pretenſions are beneath thoſe, who, without effort, poſſeſs abundantly. She expends her wit as prodigals do their money, for the pleaſure of expending, and not to make a diſplay of it. Elmira muſt paſs for a malicious woman, becauſe ſhe often mortifies the ſelf-love of others;

but the mind alone is the object of her obſervations ; her criticiſm is determined more by her natural habitude of compariſon and judging than by malevolence of ſentiment. Her diſſertations are continually upon the mind ; this is her ſphere. It is every thing, both in and for Elmira. She could not refrain from revealing a defect, which ſhe ſhould have remarked in that of a man who had ſaved her life.

PHYSICAL SENSIBILITY IS NOT THE ONLY PRINCIPLE OF OUR ACTIONS AND AMBITION.

THE ingenious and celebrated author of the book upon *the mind*, has endeavoured to demonſtrate, that phyſical ſenſibility and perſonal intereſt were the determining principles of our actions; he has ſtriven to prove, that phyſical pleaſures * are the only end of the ambitious man, amidſt all

* "The concluſion of this chapter," ſays the author, "is, that the deſire of greatneſs is always the effect of fear or pain, or of the love of phyſical pleaſures, in which all others are comprehended."

DE L'ESPRIT, tom. ii. DISCOURS iii. p. 19.

"But amongſt poliſhed people it is the vague deſire of happineſs, which, as I have already proved, is reduced to the pleaſures of the ſenſes, which, for the moſt part, inſpire the love of greatneſs. Now, of theſe pleaſures I have undoubtedly a right to chooſe that of women, as the moſt lively and ſenſible of all."

Tom. ii. p. 26.

the great projects which seem to put them at a distance from him. Examples without reasoning would be sufficient to shew the falsehood of this system. The ancient government of Egypt, that of the Persians under Cyrus and some other kings, the republic of Lacedemonium, and the first ages of the republic of Rome, offer to us a very different spectacle, and more honourable to humanity. The elevation to which man can rise by wisdom, and the vigour of institutions, is therein clearly marked. On comparing the ancients with the moderns, we seem to read the history of a different species of beings.

In man there are two distinct and separate existences; one purely physical, the other moral; not to see the impulsion of these principles in all our actions is shutting the eyes against light. Each of these existences has its separate wants. They act one upon the other by the harmony which unites them; but there are actions which result but from one of them only. The savage is wholly concerned about objects present

preſent to him, without reflecting upon the paſt, or thinking of the future. In him the faculty of thinking is benumbed, and has no more activity than the fire confined in the ſubſtance of a flint. Thought ſeems to be the forbidden fruit; it is from thought that a knowledge of good and evil is derived; it changes the ſtate of a man, and tranſports him into a new field of pains or pleaſures. His ideas are then multiplied; he reflects, compares, and morally exiſts; ſelf-love, of which it contains the ſeeds, is developed; a word, a geſture, ſpeaks joy or torment to his ſoul *.—He feels the want of being intereſted and affected, that he may perceive his exiſtence

* If any thing proves the extreme power of the mental faculties over man, it is what paſſes within him when his countenance glows with anger. A word or a look diſcompoſes his whole being. Theſe, as ſudden in their effects as the action of light, drive the blood from one extremity to the other; it ruſhes from the ſmalleſt capillary veſſel to redden his forehead and animate his eyes. So rapid a phyſical revolution is operated by ſentiment and thought in the twinkling of an eye.

in a manner flattering to his ſelf-love. If man be not ſatisfied, he is ſeized by a fatiguing languor. To prevent this bodily labour, exerciſe of the mind, and emotions of the ſoul are neceſſary. Human life reſembles the lazy beggars, who, in Holland, are condemned to pump water which inceſſantly gains upon them. The mind and ſoul have wants peculiar to themſelves, and which we conſtantly ſtrive to ſatisfy. Men run to the theatre to feel emotions; they play to be agitated by hope and fear. A woman who has no concerns ſufficient to engage moſt of her attention, or ſhe whoſe paſſions are in general leſs ardent, is greedy of amorous intrigues, wherein the heart and ſenſes have frequently no part; whilſt ſhe thinks herſelf in the purſuit of pleaſure, it is employment, and the ſucceſs of ſelf-love, which is the motive of her anxiety. Without feeling the deſires ſhe inſpires, ſhe is flattered by them, becauſe they prove to her the effect of her power. She is more attentive to the force of ſenſations in her lover, than anxious to enjoy; and

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that which frequently pleaſes her moſt when ſhe abandons her charms, and becomes prodigal of her favours, is the idea of offering treaſures to the admiration.

The univerſal deſire of feeling emotions makes men of wit the more ſought after. For the moſt part, it is not for information that others deſire to aſſociate with them, but becauſe their mind, habituated to thinking, renders their converſation more animated, and there is ſomething more new and poignant in their expreſſions than in the inſipid prattle of men of the world. Melancholy perſons, or thoſe who have but few ideas, are ſtudiouſly avoided, becauſe they quickly communicate their heavy languor. The poiſon of the Weſt India iſlands is not more ſubtile than the contagious peſt with which the tireſome man overwhelms the mind*. From the ſame principle, the want of being animated, princes formerly kept

* This may be judged of by the ſympathetic force of yawning.

fools and buffoons about their perſons: their extravagant expreſſions awakened their ſtupified minds.

It is evident that there exiſts in man, living in ſociety, a preſſing want of being intereſted, which has nothing in common with ſenſations. Self-love is equally independant of it, and not leſs imperious. Ambition is compoſed of theſe two elements, and far from preſenting any thing phyſical in its object, it is frequently an obſtacle to phyſical enjoyment. Cæſar loved women, but it was after glory and power *.

Man

* A circumſtance relative to Helvetius, was the origin of his ſyſtem upon phyſical ſenſibility. He had naturally a ſtrong inclination to women. One day, when a very young man, he was in a public garden, where he obſerved a man who was ſurrounded and careſſed by ſeveral women of diſtinguiſhed appearance. He felt himſelf inclined to envy the fate of a perſon ſeemingly ſo happy, and who attracted the attention and regards of ſuch charming women. He aſked who he was, and found him to be Maupertuis. From that moment he formed a deſign of diſtinguiſhing himſelf

Man is happy or unhappy from thinking: thought to the mind is as love to the body. A geometrician feels a delicious pleaſure in the ſolution of a problem. A poet is tranſported with joy when, in the height of his fancy, he has diſplayed all the riches of imagination.—Source of pleaſure, principle of fecundity—thought extends and perpetuates exiſtence.

Man deſires to live in opinion. He is greedy of diſtinctions which command reſpect. He loves dominion becauſe he has a will, and wiſhes it to be accompliſhed. Madame de Maintenon is a ſtriking proof of the value attached to public opinion, and of the ſtrong inclination we have to appear ſuperior to others. "The deſire," ſays ſhe, "of having a name, was my

himſelf by his talents, that he might become the object of that attention which to him appeared ſo flattering, and which he imagined he could turn to the advantage of his taſte for pleaſure. It was relative to this manner of being momentarily affected, that he eſtabliſhed a general ſyſtem, contradicted by reaſon, and the experience of every age.

"paſſion."

" paſſion."—No body ever carried it ſo far. " This ambition made me ſuffer martyr- " dom by a thouſand conſtraints which I " put upon myſelf."—She ſhut herſelf up with a woman who had the ſmall-pox, without being certain ſhe herſelf had ever had it. " A little pity," ſays ſhe, " at " firſt inclined me to it, afterwards a ſtrong " deſire to do a thing which no body " elſe had ever done."—When emetics were proſcribed by an arret, except in the laſt extremity, ſhe took them without neceſſity, and afterwards went to make viſits. ———She wiſhed people to ſay, Look at that pretty woman, ſhe has the courage of a man. The paſſion which governed madame de Maintenon, which ſubjugated all her inclinations and carried her to the ſummit of greatneſs, was far from having any thing phyſical in it: it was like that which raged in the ſoul of Alexander. The ſame motive made one conquer Aſia, and the other riſk her beauty and her life.

The

The enthuſiaſtic republicans mentioned in hiſtory, preferred the public good to every other conſideration. They loved virtue for itſelf, as a geometrician or philoſopher does truth. In the firſt ages of republics, in the vigour of their inſtitutions, the love of glory, and the deſire of being diſtinguiſhed, were not the determining principles of true republicans. The idea of moral perfection, and the ardent love of public weal inflamed their ſouls. They feared not poverty, this appeared honourable to them, even after riches began to be coveted, and luxury had made ſome progreſs.

If we wiſh to know the degrees by which men advance towards corruption, it is eaſy to determine them in a ſenſible manner. Theſe gradations muſt be ſought for in republics. Men begin by loving virtue, which is ſufficient to itſelf; afterwards they are deſirous of fame; ſelf-love ſoon corrupts the pure love of virtue: it adds to the pleaſure of well-doing, that of doing better than others. There is a third epocha, that

that in which grandeur is ſought after. This gives birth to ambition. Virtue is no more; the motive of every effort is to riſe above others. Pride, ſelf-love, and vanity reign in the ſoul of the ambitious man; but there is ſomething great in his projects which commands the reſpect of the multitude. He is obliged to have ſuperior talents and great qualities. A taſte for voluptuouſneſs, were it predominant, would be an obſtacle to his deſigns, conſequently ſenſual pleaſures cannot be the end he propoſes. The laſt degree of corruption, at which men arrive by theſe gradations, is the love of riches. Virtue and renown are now no more than names: ridicule is thrown upon thoſe who preſerve the leaſt remembrance of them. Honours and dignities are no longer deſired, except as the means of fortune; phyſical enjoyments become the univerſal aim. Every thing is then calculated by a numerary valuation; the advantages of great places are ſtated according to the opinion of what they produce.

It will be aſked, to what the ambitious man can pretend, if the man loaded with honours, and poſſeſſed of great employments, ought not to have a higher opinion of himſelf in moſt modern governments? In the firſt place, it may be anſwered, that he deceives himſelf with reſpect to his talents, and that flattery increaſes the illuſion; ſecondly, that he is intereſted, moved, and has a lively ſenſe of his exiſtence, and exerciſes his will without finding any body to contradict him. His mind is continually captivated by intereſting objects which diſſipate the languor of wearineſs. He is heard with a flattering attention, and the confidence inſpired him by the attitude of deference and reſpect, which characterize thoſe who approach his perſon, give him the enjoyment of his faculties and leiſure to develope them. In ſuch a ſituation the ambitious man is ſatisfied with himſelf and with others; and ſuch is the inclination of men to admire every thing elevated, that they always ſuppoſe him a certain degree of merit.

The

The man of ambition, far from making the gratification of his ſenſes his ſole object, is frequently led by that imperious paſſion to the annihilation of himſelf. He ſacrifices preſent enjoyments, his life, even to the vain buzzing of poſterity, which he never will hear. How can the love of pleaſures or fear of grief be found in ſuch a ſacrifice? or how can that ſentiment in man, which renders inſupportable the idea that his memory will be diſhonoured, and, on the contrary, makes the praiſes of a future age ſo dear to him, be thus explained? It has been remarked, that it has very ſeldom happened a man has put an end to his exiſtence merely to avoid pain; it is to ſhake off the burden of languor, or to avoid contempt that men abridge the number of their days; there can be no greater proof of the triumph of moral over phyſical exiſtence. The fortitude and chearfulneſs of ſavages in the moſt frightful torments, ſhew to what a degree pain is to be ſubdued, and that the ſoul may be ſo exalted as to become almoſt inſenſible of it.

It

It will perhaps, be ſaid, that favour, credit, and the pomp of honours will inſure to the voluptuous man ſucceſs with women, inacceſſible to the corruption of money. Admitting, for a moment, that this motive may determine an ambitious man, his view would be a triumph of ſelf-love: but experience has taught us, that he who is really ambitious * is rather a libertine than a lover; he likes better to corrupt than ſeduce; in this manner he œconomizes the employment of time which is precious to him. If he attaches himſelf to women, it is to ſuch as are capable of forwarding his views, and favouriſing his reigning paſſion.

The ambition of ſovereigns eſtabliſhes ſtill more clearly, that the principles of this paſſion have no relation with the deſire of phyſical enjoyments, and that it ariſes from moral ſenſibility. Hiſtory in-

* His anſwer might be that of the miniſter whom a king aſked if he made love: No, SIRE, ſaid he, I buy it ready made.

forms

forms us, that Mahomet the Second and Amurat abandoned their ſeraglios: they tore themſelves from the embraces of a thouſand women to go and ſuffer all the fatigues of war. Was voluptuouſneſs their reigning paſſion? Were the burning deſerts they croſſed to lead them to a palace of celeſtial beauties? No; but to victory ſeated upon bloody ſpoils. Their ſenſes were calm, and their imagination was inflamed by the paſſion of fame. Their ears were not ſtruck with the melody of voluptuous muſic, but with the harſh accents of war, and at a diſtance they confuſedly heard the voice of renown. It was not the temple of love which employed their thoughts, but that of immortality. They were inflamed with the deſire of gaining it, although at the expence of their exiſtence, and ſatisfied with being effaced from the earth to live eternally in the memory of mankind.

Charles the Twelfth, intoxicated with fame, ſleeping conſtantly upon a hard bed, and avoiding women, gives not the idea of a man

man whose motive was physical sensibility. Conquest was the only voluptuousness with which he was ever acquainted. The grand pensioner, Heinsius, that frugal republican, an enemy to pomp, and whose household establishment consisted in one servant, felt an extreme pleasure in humiliating the pride of Louis XIV. Love was not to decree him the reward of his labours and renown.

Eunuchs are ambitious, they desire to command, and the enjoyments of love are not the motives of their intrigues. These degraded beings have nothing but hatred for women, in return for the contempt with which they constantly load them.

Women are ambitious as well as men, and more anxious to command. Moral love was created by women, because they perceived that the empire of physical passion was destroyed the moment the senses were gratified. The jargon of gallantry, the metaphysic of sentiment, which is played off between the acts, the enjoyments of self-

love, all theſe acceſſories, which ſtifle the principal, are of female invention. Women have, in ſome meaſure, made man after their own likeneſs to extend their empire; the delirium of imagination has replaced that of the ſenſes.

In ſuppoſing even that a taſte for ſenſual pleaſures were equal in women, ſplendor, power and dignities would add nothing to the means of ſatisfying it. A voluptuous woman would rather wiſh to deſcend from the throne than to aſcend it, that ſhe might unmoleſtedly purſue the bias of her inclinations.

Mary Stewart loved pleaſures, and gave herſelf but little concern about government: the reins of that of Scotland floated in the hands of her lovers. Elizabeth was ambitious, and would be counted amongſt the great. There was ſome coquetry in her character; ſhe was flattered by the deſires ſhe inſpired, becauſe ſhe was avaricious of every kind of ſucceſs; but it is a matter of doubt whether or not

not love ever triumphed in her perſon. Was it the love of pleaſures which induced her to that conſtant endeavour to ſupport and extend the royal prerogative?

Several inclinations may accompany ambition; but if this yields to them, it is becauſe it is feeble. Every man has the ſeeds, and in the courſe of his life manifeſts ſome ſigns of ambition; but it is abated by indolence, and totally extinguiſhed by the love of pleaſures *.

Moſt men have a ſtrong deſire to be diſtinguiſhed, and to excel others in certain things; but they frequently make their fame conſiſt in frivolous or whimſical ſucceſſes. Nero's ambition was to be an excellent ſinger, he was inſenſible to

* It ſeems, ſays a moraliſt, that the devil has placed indolence upon the frontier of ſeveral virtues. It may be anſwered, that it is equally ſo upon that of ſeveral vices.

all praiſe except that given to his muſical talents.

The difference in the kind of ambition proceeds from that of character. In ſome it is audacious and enterpriſing; in others indirect, patient and artful.

Man has a preſſing and energetic moral want, more or leſs imperious. For the ſame reaſon that there are men whoſe ſenſibility is extreme in phyſical pleaſures, there are others whom ſuſceptible ſelf-love, delicate to exceſs, and the idea of virtue and honour compoſe happineſs abſolutely moral. The ſphere of their pains and pleaſures is totally independant of the ſenſes.

Of Education.

MUCH has been written upon education; and, ſince Rouſſeau, ſeveral authors have trodden in his ſteps, but they have neither his cloſe logic nor energetic ſtyle. What can reſult from theſe books, whilſt morals are in contradiction to principles? A Pariſian ſupper, the fear of ridicule, and the example of others, deſtroy in a week the effect of the moſt enlightened education directed by the beſt principles.

A preceptor uſes all his efforts to incline his pupil to virtue; but no ſooner is he taken from under his care, than the company he frequents gives him an intercourſe with knaves. In proportion as he advances in years, it is more and more demonſtrated to him, that he is fortunate and obtains conſideration and ſucceſs. He had received the precepts of virtue at an age when the ſtudy

of them was an obſtacle to his amuſements: he hearkened to them with indifference. He now has the example of vice when his paſſions eloquently ſupport its cauſe.—What becomes of his education?

A mother or a governeſs, repeats to a young girl on the point of marriage, that fidelity to her huſband is one of the firſt of her duties. Before ſhe has ſupped three times in the city ſhe has heard ſpeak of the gallantry of moſt of the women with whom ſhe lives: theſe women are conſidered, quoted and ſought after. The books ſhe reads, poetry, proſe, and converſation, all ſpeak to her of love and lovers. How is it poſſible that curioſity alone ſhould not incline her to know what that intereſting being is of which the female heart and imagination are full? How can ſhe preſerve, for her huſband, an affection which ſhe neceſſarily conceals, becauſe it is a ſubject of mockery, and whilſt ſelf-love enters into all our ſentiments?

A woman

A woman is reſpected, her ſuffrage is ſolicited, people boaſt of being admitted into her ſociety, her judgments are laws, and a whole generation has conſecrated the conſideration ſhe enjoys. Where is the young woman who does not aſpire to enjoy, in her declining years, ſo flattering an exiſtence? She thinks the moſt prudent conduct is the means of meriting it; ſhe hears a relation of the ſcandalous adventures of a woman of the ſame name; and ſhe who is ſo conſidered and reſpected is the woman in queſtion. Her aſtoniſhment is extreme!—Is it worth while to conſtrain myſelf?—This muſt be her reflection.

Habitude, vanity, and the love of property are the conſtitutive elements of paternal love. Few fathers think of the happineſs of their children, but all deſire their elevation and proſperity.

A ſon who amaſſes riches, and acquires dignities and titles, is more regretted

than he who is the moſt eſtimable by his qualities.

A father hides his tenderneſs from his children whilſt they are young, leaſt they ſhould abuſe it; he oppoſes their inclinations, and finds himſelf obliged to put on the auſtere countenance of a maſter, whilſt his heart inclines him to beſtow the careſſes of a father. The time comes when maturer age approaches them nearer to him; but the difference of their inclinations ſeparates them again. In general a father ſees nothing in his children but beings whoſe firſt ſentiment for him is fear, which is ſucceeded by that of indifference.

A ſon may end his days by the hands of juſtice, and diſhonour his family; this is the higheſt misfortune which can befall a father. What happineſs has he to expect which may be conſidered as an equivalent?

ERASTES

ERASTES ſays to himſelf, this great hereditary office, this houſe, that fine eſtate, and an immenſe revenue, will come into my poſſeſſion at the death of my father. There will no longer be obſtacles to my taſte and inclination, and I can then lead the kind of life which ſhall pleaſe me beſt. The father dies—what virtue can be wanting in a ſon ſincerely afflicted? It will, perhaps, be ſaid, that I annihilate the ſacred ſentiments of nature. It is not nature that I calumniate, but vicious ſociety which I expoſe to view. All corruption proceeds from our morals, riches and luxury. The conſtitution of man may be good; but he lives in infected air, which deſtroys the very ſeeds of virtue.

Four generations inhabit the vaſt houſe of Eraſtes, opulence reigns in every part of it, and ſeems to announce that the inhabitants have nothing to deſire, and that intereſt can excite in them no wiſh but that of mutual happineſs.——Stop below ſtairs and you will ſee a woman of eighty, decrepit

decrepit and forſaken, and whom her friends and relations ſometimes viſit for a moment as they paſs by: ſhe grieves at the neglect of her children; and ends, without conſolation, her languiſhing days. Aſcend to the firſt ſtory, and you will find a man of ſixty-five, broken and infirm, whoſe brow is overhung with chagrin, which he ſtrives to conceal; he walks with precipitate ſteps in his cloſet hung with the richeſt paintings. Upon what are his thoughts employed? If his mother died he would diſcharge his enormous debts, and, what is of more conſequence to him, augment his collection of pictures. Go up to the ſecond floor, it is inhabited by the ſon of this man; he is thirty-five years of age; he talks with his wife, the ſubject of their converſation is the ſtate of their affairs. They complain of the cruelty of their father, their creditors are preſſing, and their debts increaſe: your father looks very ill, ſays the wife, I fear he will not hold out long.—This fear, well explained, means hope.—Your grandmother is very well, adds the wife; it is to be wiſhed ſhe

may

may live, for your father would ſoon expend what ſhe amaſſes.—This means, that the father may die firſt; it is very certain the grandmother cannot live long.—Aſcend to the third ſtory, where you will ſee a ſon of ſeventeen years of age, who is talking to his valet de chambre of the means of raiſing money; the father, grandfather, and great grandfather are each in their turn the object of his complaint; their avarice and inſenſibility are deſcribed in the moſt lively colours; the young man conſpires againſt them all, whilſt a relation, lodged in a back room, thinks of the happineſs he ſhould enjoy were an epidemical diſtemper to ravage the houſe, and carry off the four generations; he is not intent upon this, but his imagination ſometimes wanders in the agreeable dream.

A father, become infirm and impatient, cannot conceive the diſſipation of a young man who has a paſſion for pleaſures. Their ſentiments have nothing in common. Their manner of living is in every reſpect

reſpect different. The ſon retires to bed at the hour the father riſes. Their taſtes are oppoſite, and their company not the ſame; their ſituations even are frequently without affinity to each other. Whatever may be judged from appearances, there can be but little affection between two perſons in whoſe manner and actions there is ſo little reſemblance. Go to the continent of America, you will there ſee fathers loved by their children: they mutually ſuccour each other. Their pains and pleaſures are in common. The ſon would loſe his friend, companion, and firmeſt ſupport in the death of his father.

Of the amiable Man.

IF we go back to the origin of the word *amiable*, it muſt ſignify that which is worthy of being loved. Yet it does not give an idea of what we ought to love, but of ſomething which pleaſes. The qualities which produce this effect are ſimply relative, and the amiable man of one age or country reſembles not him who is eſteemed ſo in another. Alcibiades was amiable in the eyes of a people inconſtant, ardent, and impreſſed by exterior graces. The duke of Beaufort, vulgar in his language, and who was handſome without dignity, like a man of the loweſt claſs, was the Alcibiades of the market-place. Both of them conformed to the manners of thoſe whom they wiſhed to ſeduce; each endeavoured to lead them by flattering their inclinations. The character of the amiable

amiable man ſhould be flexible, ſo as to conform to different manners and cuſtoms. Nothing ought to make a laſting impreſſion upon him, flexibility and ſuppleneſs conſtitute his being. He muſt have wit, but not many degrees ſuperior to thoſe with whom he lives; he muſt not ſurpriſe, but pleaſe and enliven. As his propoſed end is to amuſe, and often to ſeduce, the man eſſentially amiable, both in his natural and public character, muſt be without principles. Were he reſtrained by the fear of doing an injury, or that of ſtaining reputations, he would be leſs amuſing, and loſe a thouſand opportunities of flattering human malignity. He muſt be ſuſceptible of tender concern, without the ſhadow of affection. His wit muſt not be accompanied by knowledge, nor his complaiſance by benevolence. He muſt feign all the appearances of friendſhip, be profuſe in the unmeaning expreſſions of love, and ſacrifice every thing to the pleaſure of the moment. Such a being exiſts but

in

in a great capital, and perhaps not out of France.

Of good Company.

IN the laſt century the expreſſion, *an honeſt man*, meaned that which in the preſent age is underſtood by *a man of good company*. St. Evremont, Buſſy, Rabutin, and other authors, employ it in this ſenſe. The union of circumſtances which forms good company, muſt be ſought for in the higheſt ſpheres. He who lives with perſons who have wit, morals, and an honourable exiſtence, does not ſee bad company, nor the excellently good; not that which gives the faſhion, and forms a kind of ariſtocracy. It is in theſe circles that judgment is given, without appeal, upon men in place, authors, and

and different perſons, and upon events of every kind. The ſituations and connections of men in office are no ſecrets there, no more than amorous intrigues in general, the motives of a rupture, and the ſucceſſor which a woman gives to her lover. A blind enthuſiaſm reigns in every mind, and the head is inflamed by a falſe ardor. Authors, who are protected and well ſpoken of by good company, obtain a momentary ſucceſs, often diſavowed by the public, but a penſion conſoles them for ſuch an injuſtice. Neither genius, wit, nor marked character muſt be ſought after in what is called good company. Thoſe who poſſeſs theſe qualities would be ſuffered there with impatience, and find themſelves miſplaced. Great men have never lived in the circles of good company, they appear in them; but the ſhackles with which a man of ſuperior underſtanding is loaded, drive him thence into the boſom of his family, to his miſtreſs, or to the ſociety of particular friends; he ſeeks confidence, and needs not the petty ſucceſſes of ſociety to aſſure him of his worth. Certain

tain impoſtors reign in good company, and ridicule has there its ſeat of empire. Thoſe who are attached to the world and willing to ſacrifice to fortune muſt appear in this company; and in that caſe they muſt poſſeſs the art of intereſting ſome woman of intrigue who has a ſervile troop at her command. But he who can there find amuſement, and thinks himſelf honoured by living in it, bears upon his forehead the ſtamp of mediocrity.

A man once adopted in one of theſe ſocieties which lead the faſhion, may chuſe the character beſt ſuited to his diſpoſition; he may be perſonal, fantaſtical, trifling, gloomy, choleric, or pedantic; if there be ſomething ſingular in him, every thing elſe will be looked over, impertinence even, and other ſocieties will ſtrive which ſhall applaud his oddities moſt. Society permits every kind of pretenſion, provided it be ſupported by a name or great fortune, or protected by perſons who enjoy theſe advantages. The torrent of diſſipation pre-

vents the examination of titles, and thoſe who make bold and frequent attempts may fill what character they pleaſe in the world.

CANIDIA awakes in the morning and ſays to herſelf—I have wit. She reads the papers, receives the viſits of men of wit and information, repeats to one what ſhe has learned from another, forms to herſelf opinions, and gives a ſupper. She is extolled, and two years painful flattery of men of celebrity procure her a great reputation. Her wit, unknown for forty years, and of a nature to be ſo, ſuddenly breaks out. Canidia is the oracle conſulted; her ſuffrage is ſolicited, and her deciſions paſs for laws. A man ſays I am virtuous; you forget his manner of life, and ſay, he is virtuous. Another, I am noble and diſintereſted;——every thing he poſſeſſes is the fruit of his intrigues, and you quote his diſintereſtedneſs.

A man without merit, or any thing agreeable,

agreeable, is advantageouſly eſtabliſhed in ſociety, where he excels and is imperious. There is no ſupper to which he is not one of the firſt who are invited. People complain when they have not ſeen him: what is the reaſon of this ſucceſs? Thirty years ago a faſhionable woman took a liking to him, as ſhe would have done to a dog or a parrot. His own word has been taken for his merit, and he has remained in poſſeſſion of the privilege of being ſought after.

DAMON is ill; courtiers and citizens come in crowds to ſee him; there are not chairs enough in his apartment for them all to ſit down. The moſt elegant young women, old ones of the greateſt conſideration, and men in place are eager to viſit him. His ſituation is ſpoken of at every ſupper: it is known to a moment when he took a baſon of broth. Such a man ſeems dear to all France. Let him not, however, be too proud of it! Company ſeek company, and people are ſure to find it at his houſe, and

there learn the news of the day. Damon dies, and the next day nobody hears a word about him.

OF THE APPROACHES OF DIFFERENT CLASSES OF SOCIETY TO EACH OTHER.

THE different ſocieties of the laſt century were each contained within certain limits; each rank was diſtinguiſhed by proper characteriſtics, which, in ſome perſons, were carried to exceſs. An affectation of the cuſtoms which governed each claſs, or the pretenſions of imitating thoſe of another, furniſhed a great field to the critical obſerver. The courtier and citizen were different beings by their dreſs, manners, way of living, and language. The different ages of life were marked by a particular manner of dreſs; old men,

and

and thoſe of a middle age, had different characters to fill in ſociety; their manners, amuſements and pleaſures were ſuited to their particular time of life. Every claſs, by a frequent communication with others, has changed its diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic. The courtier has loſt a part of his dignity, the magiſtrate all his gravity, and the financier his vulgarity; alliances have been multiplied between the nobility, the gown, and finance, and have diminiſhed the diſtance between the ſeveral ranks of ſubjects. The diſtinguiſhing ſhades of national characters are effaced by communication and habitude. The ſame thing has happened in ſociety; pleaſures, amuſements, and a taſte for the arts, have united every claſs; the ſituation of a man is no longer inquired after, before he is admitted into a circle; the only queſtion goes to know whether or not he be amiable. The multiplication of riches, and the deſire of enjoyments, which they produce and favouriſe, make the intervals of ſociety diſappear. Men, continually united by a taſte for pleaſures,

become more diſſipated. Private and domeſtic life is the fate of perſons in obſcure ſituations or totally without fortune. He who has a good ſtomach, who plays, and knows the news of the day, is of every age and condition. He is neither a magiſtrate, a financier, the father of a family, nor a huſband. He is a man of the world: at his death every body is ſurpriſed to hear that he was eighty years of age. Nobody would have ſuppoſed it from the life he led. Thoſe with whom he lived, knew not that he was great grandfather, huſband, or father. What then was he in their eſtimation? He had a quarter of a lodge at the opera, played at lotto, and ſupped in company.

Of Bon Ton and Ridicule.

WHAT is called bon ton is eſſential to men of mediocrity, but a man of ſuperior underſtanding cannot ſubject himſelf to the laws it impoſes. It would be neceſſary to ſacrifice his ideas or to weaken them. The dictionary of bon ton is not extenſive enough for him. A certain diſcernment is neceſſary to diſcover ridicule, and to expreſs it in an agreeable manner. But he whoſe wit is very ſuperior, finds nothing ridiculous; he ſees nothing particular; and manners, cuſtoms, and the oddities of men and nations appear to him to be in the nature of things. What appears extraordinary to others is familiar to a man of this deſcription: his aſtoniſhment is at an end. It is upon the ſame principle that a man is not affected by that which ſurpriſes a child or makes him laugh.

Ridicule is invented by frivolous minds. It circumſcribes ideas within certain limits, ſubjects converſation to a certain jargon, and eſtabliſhes conventions which muſt be implicitly fulfilled. It is an enemy to candour and ſimplicity, and exerciſed upon virtue and merit. The man of genius, he who is endowed with a great talent, may be the victims of ridicule; but the man of wit braves all its ſhafts. Ridicule permits not men to have their natural elevation; they muſt neither be above nor below the eſtabliſhed degree. It gives an idea of the tyrant in the fable, who meaſured all his gueſts upon his bed, and cut off or lengthened the feet of thoſe who were too tall or too ſhort.

If a man becomes the object of public attention by favour, the mode, or a great action, ridicule vaniſhes. His words, actions, and perſon, which, in another caſe, would have been the objects of ridicule, are now thoſe of admiration. It would be the faſhion to limp, have a caſt in the eyes, or ſpeak vulgarly, if

theſe

theſe were the defects of a man of celebrity.

The greateſt misfortune is the object by preference of ridicule.

Put the king by my ſide three days, ſaid the cardinal de Retz, and I ſhall be maſter of Paris. Raiſe me to favour may it be ſaid, and the moſt delicate courtiers will admire the manners and ton which they ridiculed the evening before.

There is but a thin partition between ridicule and the ſublime.

When a man is celebrated, people become juſt by enthuſiaſm, his ignorance of the conventions of ſociety is then conſtrued into a merit: this appears to be beneath his conſideration. Men of mediocrity ſeem to ſay, It is proper we ſhould know theſe things, but this man ought to be ignorant of them.

Of Riches.

A MAN of quality formerly placed all his property in land, and endeavoured to increaſe his eſtate. Contracts were looked upon as ignoble, but at preſent men ſell their eſtates to purchaſe ſtock of every kind in the funds; and a man of the firſt rank knows exactly that the loan of thirty-ſix millions has riſen ſix-eights, and that another is fallen one and a half; he is connected with ſtock-brokers, and has his port-folio like a financier; the revolutions upon the exchange engage his attention, and are the ſubjects of converſation in the politeſt circles; the young, beautiful and elegant Cordelia ſpeaks of the *gabelle* *, *corvies* †, and public credit, and has taken

* An exciſe in France upon ſalt; and a place in Paris where ſalt is ſold to the citizens. T.

† The repair of high roads, and the duty certain perſons are obliged to do or compound for. T.

a lover

a lover who has written a memoir upon the courſe of exchange.

The greateſt advantage ariſing from the poſſeſſion of money, is the power of haſtening, in ſome meaſure, the progreſs of time, and of accelerating events. By means of this powerful agent, diſtances are ſhortened, and projects ſpeedily executed. Perſons who can ſecond our views, are anxious to remove every difficulty. It ſeems that a rich man can produce every thing with money, as fruits are produced in hot-houſes; he multiplies enjoyments, and has the greateſt variety of them within his reach. Fatal error! How ſtrangely do men deceive themſelves in attaining ſo ſpeedily their end without the pleaſing ſatisfaction of the agreeable means which lead to it. Would the ſportſman, who ſhould drive a thouſand partridges into his poultry-yard, have much pleaſure in ſhooting them there? deprived of the emotion of deſire, his mind and body would be benumbed, and he would have no opportunity

portunity of exerciſing his ſkill, whence ariſes a great part of his amuſement. In this manner it is that fortune treats the rich.

It is related, that one day the maſter of the gods, fatigued by the complaints of the indigent, who continually repeated, that the rich enjoyed every thing, honours, power and pleaſure, felt himſelf moved and came to their aſſiſtance. It is too much, ſaid he to Fortune, that you who beſtow ſceptres and dignities, ſhould have in your power the diſpoſal of pleaſure. Ah, replied the goddeſs, if I could not procure pleaſure, my power would be deſtroyed, dignities would be an inſupportable burden, and honours ſo many ſplendid embarraſſments. Well, ſaid Jupiter, I leave you pleaſure, but as ſoon as you appear, deſires ſhall be extinguiſhed. The equilibrium, added he, will, by theſe means, be a little re-eſtabliſhed. Fortune thought the maſter of the gods had that day drank rather too much

much nectar. What! exclaimed she, he thinks to do me an injury, and he increases my power. The instant my favourites feel desires, they will be satisfied. The offerings of incense will be more abundant upon my altars.——— Experience has proved how blind Fortune was.

Of Avarice.

METALS are the repreſentations of enjoyments, and muſt naturally inflame the imagination of man. He therein pleaſingly contemplates the inſtrument of his happineſs; upon their ſurface the imperious man ſees engraved the ſlavery he means to impoſe; and the haughty diſcover in them the greateſt diſtinctions. The voluptuous man previouſly ſmiles at the beauties which ſeem to ſolicit his favour, and he who is ambitious removes in his imagination every obſtacle to fame, purchaſes ſuffrages, and fills up every interval. The differences which exiſt in the kind of love men have for riches are eſtabliſhed by age and character. A taſte for pleaſure, or an inclination to voluptuouſneſs, may produce avidity, but not an attachment to money; a deſire of ſatisfying the paſſions, but not a wiſh to preſerve

preſerve it. An inquietude for the future is the reigning ſentiment of weak and puſillanimous characters; they are leſs affected by an enjoyment than by the fear of wants: from this ſituation of mind comes avarice. In deſpotic governments, where the exceſs of power renders every kind of poſſeſſion precarious, fear acts upon men more forcibly than any other ſentiment. In this ſituation, they are more inclined to avarice than in moſt others; they wiſh to be continually inſured from want, for which purpoſe they collect their property into a narrow compaſs, and hide their gold; according to age, or the ſtrength of the paſſions, they are deſirous of riches, as a powerful vehicle, or a ſafe port where they may brave all the revolutions of fortune. Paſſions which acquire their force from that of the ſoul, inſpire the ardor of acquiring treaſures for the purpoſe of diſtributing them, and the confuſed idea of power inſeparably attached to riches, renders them ſtill more valuable to the man of ambition. It was from this motive that

Sylla,

Sylla, Pompey, and Cæſar amaſſed immenſe treaſures; they had recourſe to their aſſiſtance to place themſelves in a ſituation, which, by nature, they ſeemed deſtined to fill.

Youth is the ſeaſon of lively inclinations, tumultuous deſires, and ardent paſſions, and the period of life when avarice has the leaſt power over the mind. The deſire of enjoyments is too ſtrong in youth to be ſatisfied with their repreſentative ſigns: this would reſemble thoſe blind politicians who make the proſperity of nations conſiſt in the poſſeſſion of ſpecie. The idea of ſpeedy means is in youth always attached to that of money, and the preſſing neceſſity of making a continued uſe of it, is inimical to accumulation.

In conſidering the impatient ardour of the paſſions in youth, we might be led to ſuppoſe that life was to laſt but for a day; but the precautions of the aged ſeem to be ſuch as if it were to be eternal. This happens

happens becauſe deſire is extreme in youth, and fear, without bounds, in age. For theſe reaſons, ſtrong minds, and youth, which is the age of ſtrength, are eager to enjoy, and unacquainted with avarice. The decline of the ſenſations, and that of the machine, whence they derive their principle, renders the mind reſtleſs and fearful. This is the epocha when avarice gains poſſeſſion of the hearts of moſt men. It outlives the paſſions, eſtabliſhes its throne upon their ruins, and ſeems to increaſe as ſtrength declines. Human life is divided between hope and fear. The heart and mind are ſucceſſively agitated by their powerful influence. The man far advanced in years is enſlaved by fear. He ſeems to live but in the paſt, at the epocha of his ſtrength, which has long left him, and in the tender remembrance of the happineſs by the loſs of which he is afflicted. He ſeems to loſe ſight of every thing. The affinity between him and others ſeems daily to diminiſh, and his connections with ſociety become leſs numerous. In this ſtate of ſolitude he

perceives his exiſtence to be troubleſome to others, and that his heirs impatiently count every moment of it. His languiſhing days no longer offer that diſtant perſpective to which others are attached by the hopes of a happy change. Life is uninteresting to him. He then becomes ſorrowful in the contemplation of his nothingneſs. Alarmed by his weakneſs, and irritated by the neglect of others, he ſeeks a ſupport in his abandoned ſtate, and his fortune offers him a certain reſource. His happineſs appears to depend upon the preſervation and increaſe of his property. Sad experience has taught an old man the inſtability of friendſhip, and convinced him that intereſt, the only indiſſoluble bond of attachment, wholly governs mankind. He feels not the reſtraints he impoſes on himſelf; he knows that the poſſeſſion only of riches is ſufficient to ſave him from the contempt inſeparable from poverty. As fear, the child of weakneſs, continually torments his imagination, nothing but the preſence of his only ſupport can remove it; his fortune

muſt

muſt be ever before his eyes; it muſt be portable, and his faithful companion wherever he goes. Nothing but his gold can give him chearfulneſs, and he frequently contemplates it as the object of his tendereſt affection. He ſees in his fortune both power and independence; the means of corrupting women, which replace thoſe of pleaſing them, the comfort of his afflictions, the inſtrument of his vengeance againſt ingratitude, and the moſt powerful attraction offered to reſpectful cares and attention. Theſe facts prove that the exceſſive love of riches ariſes from weakneſs and the loſs of faculties, and is ſatisfied in the contemplation of that which it is afraid to enjoy.

OF THE OPULENT MAN.

AT the ſame time that the poſſeſſions of ſome men have been ſuperior to thoſe of moſt others, it would have been difficult to have found any body beneath them, either in birth or underſtanding. There was no place for ſuch perſons in ſociety: they formed a claſs apart, and were by turns deſpiſed and flattered.

It is the intereſt of a man who has no ſuperiority but that of riches, to exaggerate the advantages of the fortune by which he is diſtinguiſhed. He has no regard for talents, except thoſe which lead to riches; the reſt are, in his eſtimation, but vain amuſements of the mind. If Voltaire enjoys any part of his eſteem, it is becauſe he found the means of acquiring a great fortune. A farmer-general appears to him one of the ſtrongeſt pillars of the ſtate; and if he were told of a country where

where none of theſe vultures exiſt, he would laugh like a king of Pegu, on learning that there was no king at Venice. He is uncouth by the remembrance of his former ſituation: it is thus that negroes, become maſters, are always inhuman.

The rapid paſſage from the duſt of his office to the habitation of a magnificent houſe, has given him no opportunity of learning the different degrees of politeneſs, nor the conventions of ſociety; he is either mean or arrogant. His life is divided into two ſtates of languor, the ſatiety and intoxication of fortune *.

The poor are continually diſpoſed to forget themſelves by the want to which they are ſlaves; the rich to forget others by the diſtance at which they are placed from them. Too widely ſeparated from the reſt of mankind, kings are the only friends

* *Go wretch, ſleep off thy gold*, ſaid one day a wit to a farmer-general, whoſe inſolence had excited his contempt.

which remain to them. Nothing but money can procure them the favours of love, and the deceitful demonſtrations of eſteem or friendſhip. The moment their tables are covered with delicious meats, or their entertainments celebrated, they become intoxicated with the praiſe as if it were perſonal. They do themſelves juſtice.—They become, in ſome meaſure, confounded with their diſhes, and transformed into well taſted partridges, and wine of Tokai.

Mercenaries ſell their hands to the rich for a mean but indiſpenſible exiſtence: the man of the world, ſtill more vile, ſells his wit and liberty for delicate meats.

Mondor inhabits a palace, and is ſometimes ſecretly aſhamed of its magnificence. He contemplates, without pleaſure, the maſter-pieces of art with which the apartments are not ornamented but hung. All he knows of their excellence is by the price they coſt him. Men have but little curioſity to be acquainted with his perſon, but

but anxiouſly deſire to ſee his houſe. He ſhews it, and ſeems more the ſteward than the maſter. He maims and confounds the names of the painters and ſculptors. Every thing is in heaps: the eye knows not where to repoſe: people think they are in a large warehouſe, and return from it fatigued and diſguſted with the richneſs. A man ſo opulent is not happy. His ſoul is benumbed by ſatiety; his ſenſes are fatigued; his mind is without deſires, and his vanity diſguſted with inſipid incenſe. What will he do with the immenſe property he poſſeſſes? Let him ſuccour the wretched! This he has attempted, but has ceaſed his charities leaſt he ſhould encourage vice and idleneſs. Let him aſſiſt an honeſt man whoſe affairs are embarraſſed! He has lately obliged a man high in power and credit, by lending him, at five per cent. a million of livres to purchaſe a conſiderable employment, and has taken a mortgage upon an enormous property. Mondor does not lend to the firſt comer, he only whoſe rank is ſufficiently elevated to flatter his vanity, and rich enough to

offer ſecurity beyond the reach of events, can expect his aſſiſtance.——The ſervices you render Mondor, the numerous pleaſures which preſent themſelves to you, are neither ſufficient to animate your life, nor diſſipate the languor of ſatiety. I have reflected upon your ſituation. You muſt endeavour to increaſe your riches, this is the only means you have of employing them, or of intereſting your mind.

Dorante has neither birth nor merit. He has ſome wit of a malicious turn. Circumſtances have introduced him into ſocieties of the firſt rank, and by degrees he is become connected with the greateſt men at court, and the moſt diſtinguiſhed citizens. His familiarity is extreme with women of the higheſt diſtinction, as well as with princes, people in place, and perſons in favour. He is ill-tempered, wavering and haſty; his manners would not become a man of the higheſt birth. Dorante is afraid of appearing inferior, and has found no other means of avoiding it but by being inſolent.

Th

The only difference between an honeſt man and a knave, frequently conſiſts in a man's deceiving or not deceiving himſelf.

An honeſt man feels more embarraſſment than a knave in juſtifying himſelf; the former never thinks of being ſuſpected, the latter previouſly prepares for his defence.

Irregularity of moſt kinds is frequently the effect of weakneſs and a ſick appetite; ſingular refinements are uſed to excite it. A paſſion which can never be completely ſatisfied, becomes irritated, and graſps at the ſhadow of pleaſure, which continually eſcapes it. The love of impotence is an unbounded horizon.

Sully and la Bruyere ſay, that public affairs muſt not be intruſted to him who has not found the means of making his own fortune. Diſintereſtedneſs, and great public concerns may make a man neglect his domeſtic intereſts, and ſtill render him more

more capable of managing thoſe of government.

With reſpect to money concerns, the malverſations of a ſtateſman may be calculated. The effects of ignorance are beyond all computation.

A great error in thoſe who wiſh to pleaſe and ſucceed is their endeavouring to give others an opinion of their merit, inſtead of which they ought to appear convinced of the ſuperiority of the merit of thoſe whom they ſolicit, as their ſureſt means of ſucceſs.

OF A MAN WHO HAS MADE A FORTUNE BY KNOWING HOW TO APPEAR AT EASE UNDER THE IMPRESSION OF WEARINESS AND LANGUOR.

CHRYSANTE enjoys an immenſe income. He has had conſiderable concerns in different affairs, and has penſions, governorſhips and dignities; all theſe have come by degrees without exciting envy. People are ſurpriſed at his fortune. Chryſante is not known to the public by any great action; he is neither the ſon nor nephew of a miniſter or a miſtreſs, nor has he ever been in favour with the ſovereign; he is ſcarcely known to him. What has Chryſante done? He has fatigued himſelf during thirty years, and paſſed nights which young men conſecrate

to

to pleaſure, in liſtening to the ſtories of a maid of honour of the laſt century, who had ſtill ſome credit, and whoſe recitals had always an air of novelty to him. He has played cavagnoles * without number. The hours he has lounged away in different anti-chambers would make ſeveral years. He has been a confident in the amours of four or five perſons in power; has hearkened, without ſhewing the leaſt ſigns of impatience, to faſtidious proprietors, who have each given a hundred times a deſcription of the elegance of their houſes, and has gone as many times with an appearance of pleaſure to ſee theſe edifices. Chryſante has for ſeveral years patiently liſtened to Dorimont, whilſt he gave a pompous account of his genealogy and alliances, and has aſſiſted a dozen times at the reading of the works of Alcidon without falling a ſleep. Theſe are his ſervices: they are numerous and varied. He has

* A game introduced in France in the reign of Louis XIV. T.

never

never been in the trenches, but what merit is there in being expoſed to danger? That of riſking one's life; Chryſante ſacrifices his by piece-meal. The miniſter and magiſtrate who renounce all pleaſures, and paſs a laborious life in the cloſet, are objects of admiration. Chryſante alſo has abandoned pleaſure, and paſſed a part of his life ſtill more diſagreeably. It was neceſſary he ſhould have another kind of merit. The magiſtrate and miniſter may publiſh the reſult of their application, but Chryſante, in the midſt of the moſt fatiguing occupations, had a ſerene countenance and the appearance of being at eaſe.

There are people who are ſatisfied with the appearances of favour, without reaping from it any advantage. Their happineſs conſiſts in having free acceſs to a miniſter or a great man, in living with him upon friendly terms, and in being initiated to ſecrets without having any intereſt in them. They are

the

the furniture of men in place, which their ſucceſſors inherit. Their intimacy is continued by their having neither will nor ſentiment, and by not aſking favours, either for themſelves or others. Vanity is the reigning paſſion of men of this deſcription.

CHARACTER OF THE VAIN AND PERSONAL MAN.

CHRYSIS has politeneſs of manners, flexibility of character, and gentleneſs of temper. There is nothing to which he is particularly attached, and if he ſhews an air of concern, it is certainly for a perſon connected with people in favour. He makes one in every circle, and holds to that which takes the lead. He is provided with ſome ſtories which he gracefully relates. He never diſſents from what is ſaid by others, and his attention to them is always accompanied by an obliging ſmile. He never breaks with any body, and when a man in place begins to loſe his credit, Chryſis inſenſibly withdraws himſelf, and it always happens that he has ſome ſubject of complaint againſt a miniſter

miniſter in diſgrace. He is looked upon in ſociety as a ſafe man. Paſſiveneſs is no uneaſy virtue for a man who cannot be affected. His morals are neither good nor bad, they are thoſe of the age in which he lives, and of the ſociety moſt diſtinguiſhed. He is the friend of every man in place, and takes care never to aſk for any thing, or to ſolicit but coldly. Aſk him not for his intereſt: he gueſſes your wants, and his coolneſs announces that he foreſees your intention. Chryſis has for forty years been cordially received by the great, by miniſters, and men in place; they are certain of never being importuned by his ſolicitations. He dines with the miniſter who is diſgraced, in the evening he ſups with his ſucceſſor. He ſeems to be of every family, and cannot accept half the invitations he receives. Such a manner of life is ſo flattering to him that nothing can engage him to interrupt the courſe of it. All his credit is uſeleſs to his relations and friends. The man of merit, the unfortunate and perſecuted

perſecuted have no claim to his aſſiſtance. A word would be ſufficient to make his friend happy; he will not pronounce it. Could the leaſt effort prevent the greateſt act of injuſtice, Chryſis would not make it. He will never run the riſk of embarraſſing a man in place leaſt his future reception ſhould be leſs cordial.

Of the Advantages of Mediocrity.

EVERY kind of mediocrity ultimately procures ſucceſs. The man of wit knows, within a trifle, the extent of his limits, he compares himſelf with others, and conſequently is not always ſatisfied with the reſult. The fool is too frequently adverti ſed of his incapacity not to feel himſelf humiliated. The man of mediocrity is the happieſt of mortals, whether his contemplations be interiorly or exteriorly directed; he is never led away by imagination, and takes a pride in being exempt from its wanderings. He has a ſecret pleaſure in ſpeaking of the faults and errors of men of wit. He miſtakes frigidity of mind and ſlowneſs of deciſion for judgment, wiſdom or reaſon. He is a pilot in a little bark, who never quits the coaſt, and is more employed in

in counting the ſhipwrecks of veſſels out at ſea, than the ſucceſſes of thoſe which arrive ſafe in port.

Character of a Man of Mediocrity.

THERE is nothing remarkable in the perſon of Adraſtes. He does not excel, but he is never loſt ſight of. He is conſidered at court, and well received in the city. It is he who is conſulted upon a marriage, an affair, and upon the conduct to be obſerved on a delicate occaſion; his circumſpection prevents him from ſolving difficulties, but never makes him an enemy. He is not one of thoſe men early announced as perſons who ſeem deſtined to fill the higheſt offices of ſtate, nor on whom public attention is

fixed. Adraſtes is always ſpoken of as a man who will certainly come to an higher employment than that which he now holds: and, placed at an equal diſtance between Envy and Contempt, he is uninterruptedly making his way to the preferment he has in view. Shall I ſay Adraſtes has wit? This is impoſſible.—That he is wholly devoid of it? That would be injuſtice. He has never made himſelf thoroughly maſter of any thing; he had not the means of doing it; but he has much ſuperficial knowledge, and is particularly fond of detail. He has a fund ſufficient to join for a moment in the converſation of every circle; he is a *ſerinette* upon which there are ſet a few airs. What he ſays is accommodated to the general run of ideas; his probity is exact and ſcrupulous, and there is ſomething cool and deliberate in all his proceedings. His expreſſions are never indiſcreet, nor his conduct irregular; every part of his behaviour is ſo natural, that it coſts him no effort, and he knows not what it is

to

to repreſs the ſudden emotions of the ſoul, nor the vivacity of the mind.—— Adraſtes, you are yet but in the middle of your career;—live, and a conſiderable fortune awaits you; and who knows but a happy and unexpected event may give of you the idea of a great man; you excel, Adraſtes, in your way, you are a man of great capacity in the eyes of fools, and the firſt among men of mediocrity.

Of Man's Inclination to admire every Kind of Power.

THE imagination is prejudiced in favour of power of every kind, and thoſe who expect no advantages from it are allured by its charms. The moſt virtuous women deſpiſe the impotent. The moſt generous and humane maſter inſenſibly ſees his ſervants, ſeduced by the attraction of youth, which preſents the image of power, give the preference to his ſon.

The age of the paſſions, and of talents, is the epocha of every kind of ſucceſs. None but perſons of this time of life can inſpire enthuſiaſm and excite a tender concern. Men muſt die young, like Alexander and Germanicus, to make their remembrance

membrance dear, and leave behind them great names. When we think of Mithridates with a long beard, we coldly aſſent to his talents and courage.

Men are agreeably contemplated in the fulneſs of their ſtrength, and in the moment of the energy of the paſſions. The ideas of degradation and weakneſs diminiſh admiration. A fine woman, cut off in the flower of her age, leaves to poſterity an idea of the charms for which ſhe was celebrated. Ninon, who was beautiful, and lived to a decrepit old age, preſents the image of a ſenſible and philoſophic woman, but madame de Montbazon recalls nothing but the idea of beauty.

There is an age for every one to die at.

The miſer deprives himſelf of neceſſaries; he is known to be cruel and unfeeling, and incapable of rendering the moſt trifling ſervice. He permits him-

ſelf no enjoyment of which others can partake. It ſeems therefore as if nothing ought to gain him the leaſt attention. This man is nevertheleſs conſidered, and is of more conſequence in a circle than an honeſt man without fortune. People reſpect in him a power of which he makes no uſe, and the certainty of his having no favour to aſk is another motive for treating him well.

Of Goodness and Probity.

GOODNESS and ſimplicity are frequently confounded. Goodneſs is a quality of the heart, and ſimplicity conſiſts in a facility of manners which renders them agreeable to others; they may nevertheleſs be allied to every vice, and have no relation with virtue.

Probity, in an intereſted point of view, is ultimately that which is the moſt ſafe and advantageous. Many knaviſh tricks proceed from errors in calculation.

It ſeldom happens that there is a neceſſity of deciding between a good action, and a preſent, conſiderable, and certain advantage.

OF CONFIDENCE IN PHYSICIANS.

SOME people ſay, they have confidence in Strabon the phyſician. What can be the meaning of theſe words? They who ſpeak in this manner know nothing of the medical art, are no judges of profeſſional knowledge, nor of the talents neceſſary to reduce it to practice, and are frequently incapable of appreciating either wit or learning.

If medicine be an uſeful art, and there be phyſicians ſuperior to others, it ought to be remarked, that in the country, and in ſome cities even, fewer people die than in the capital, and at certain epochas when there are celebrated phyſicians.

A man who puts his whole confidence in a phyſician of great reputation is much

much to be pitied. When he is ill, perhaps ſome circumſtance will prevent his having his aſſiſtance. If he travels, he will certainly be deprived of it: if he be in the country, he cannot have it in time.

Medicine, as well as the moſt trifling objects, is under the influence of faſhion. For ten years it is the faſhion to preſcribe bleeding in an illneſs; another method is afterwards adopted. Sometimes warm injections are the mode, at others cold ones. Sylva ſaid, *Small-pox, I will accuſtom thee to bleeding.*

In medicine there is a certain eſtabliſhed method to which all thoſe of the profeſſion attach themſelves. Perhaps in two or three caſes a man of great genius makes a profound combination which ſaves a patient who would have periſhed under any other phyſician. But who will point out to me this man of ſuperior abilities? What means have I, who am ignorant of

of his art, of forming a judgment of them?

Whether phyſicians be more or leſs numerous, able, or ignorant, I learn from the funeral regiſters, that mortality, among men, is in the proportion of about three to a hundred.

Men of the world, and women, think their notary and advocate the firſt of all notaries and advocates. Nothing is more eaſy than to deceive in a matter abſolutely unknown to thoſe before whom it is treated of. The common place expreſſions of every profeſſion become, in the opinion of the ignorant, ſo many ſublime ſentences. Add to this a ſituation wherein they are highly concerned, as in an illneſs, for example, and it will be perceived how eaſy it is for a phyſician to acquire a great reputation, if he be a man of parts, and has a facility of expreſſion.

Of the Superiority of the Ancients over the Moderns.

THE queſtion of the ſuperiority of the ancients over the moderns was, at the end of the laſt century and the beginning of the preſent, very warmly debated, but in the publications upon this ſubject it appears not to have been conſidered in a true point of view.

The principal adverſary of the ancients, Penault, was a man of ſuperficial underſtanding, and without erudition. La Mothe had much wit, but had neither energy nor ſentiment, and was unacquainted with antiquity. All their efforts went to decry Homer, whom they did not underſtand. Madame Dacier, learned in the manner of the fifteenth century, and without taſte or diſcernment, was a fanatic in favour of the

the great poet, and extolled, with a dull enthuſiaſm, the moſt ſimple paſſages of his work.

Boileau was the only man in France, who, in this diſpute, gave proofs of taſte and learning, and, in many reſpects, he decided in favour of the moderns. In tragedy, ſays he, we are ſuperior to the Latins. In lyric poetry he agrées to an equality, and ſince Boileau wrote, Rouſſeau has added to our poetical riches of this kind. Boileau confeſſes that the age of Louis the Fourteenth was ſuperior in comic poetry to that of Auguſtus, poſterior to the time of Terence. Finally, he obſerves, that novels, in which there are ſome beauties, were unknown to the ancients. He would have ſpoken ſtill more favourably of this kind of production, had he read Candide, Zadig, Clariſſa, Tom Jones, and la Nouvelle-Héloïſe. In the time of Boileau there were but few novels really intereſting; the princeſs of Cleves and Zaide were the moſt eſteemed. Theſe works contain nothing but a recital of amorous adventures

tures delicately expreſſed. But there are ſeveral modern novels in which ſentiment, philoſophy, and a deſcription of the manners of different claſſes of men are united.

The true manner of diſcuſſing the queſtion of the ſuperiority of the ancients over the moderns would have been,

To examine attentively the mechaniſm of the Greek and Roman languages; to conſider whether or not they were more favourable to poetry and eloquence, or contained a greater variety of expreſſion; whether or not they had more harmony and livelineſs than the modern languages.

To compare ancient with modern authors, and the difficulties of the works in which their abilities were exerciſed.

To determine the influence of government and that of climate.

To compare the great men of every kind.

In following this method with impartiality, a certain result would have been obtained. Some of these rules were observed, but without order or profound meditation.

La Mothe, who was neither a poet nor an orator, nor had the least knowledge of the Greek, maintained that the French language rendered every idea; it is true he had no need of any other, because it was sufficient to express what his clear and methodical mind conceived. Dumarsais would have spoken of ancient and modern languages in a more enlightened manner, and have compared them more justly.

At the time of these disputes, the moderns were not so rich as they now are, and the balance must naturally have inclined to the side of the ancients: but the men of superior genius, who, within the last

laſt half century have appeared in Europe, and more particularly in France, render the party more equal. The queſtion was not ripe for diſcuſſion in the time of Boileau and de la Mothe. The moderns then appeared like backward children.

No modern author is equal to Homer or Virgil in epic poetry; notwithſtanding the beauty of the verſes, and the rich deſcriptions in the Henriade, it muſt be acknowledged that it is wholly unintereſting. We are forced to decide in favour of the ancient poets of this kind; but may not the tragedies of Corneille, Racine, Voltaire and Crebillon be oppoſed to two poems? Sophocles and Euripides, for I will not ſpeak of the tragic declamations of Seneca, have ſerved as models to modern authors: Racine is much indebted to them. But has not he ſurpaſſed his maſters? The great effects which the repreſentation of the Greek tragedies produced, ſeem to be in favour of the ancients, and

to give them the pre-eminence. But to judge by effects of the merit of the pieces, it would be neceſſary to eſtabliſh the difference produced by the ſenſibility of the audience. This was extreme in the Grecians, and the art of the actors, the harmony of the language, added to intereſting events, muſt have greatly contributed to the ſucceſs of the compoſition.

The modern Pliny, by his ſagacity, the extent of his genius, and his majeſtic ſtyle, is certainly ſuperior to the Pliny of the ancients.

Our comedies are ſuperior to thoſe of Plautus and Terence; theſe are frequently cold, and have but little variety of intrigue. What ancient author can be compared to Moliere, or even to Regnard: the French theatre has, ſince their time, been enriched by a great number of pieces, upon which continued ſucceſs has ſtamped the impreſſion of high merit.

By

By the choice of a happy ſubject, that which is moſt poignant in real comedy, is joined in the *Metromanie* * to all the pomp of poetry.

L'Art Poétique of Boileau, his Epiſtles, and thoſe of Voltaire, may be advantageouſly compared with the epiſtles of Horace, and his Art of Poetry. The fine Odes of Rouſſeau are not inferior in harmony to thoſe of Pindar and Horace, and the fugitive pieces of Voltaire have no model in antiquity.

Rivals are not ſo eaſily found for ancient orators and hiſtorians, and there are ſeveral reaſons for their ſuperiority over the moderns. The form of government, which opened to the eloquent man a road to the higheſt honours, the importance of the ſubject of debate, and the energy of republican minds point out the reaſon why eloquence could not fail to

* A comedy by Piron. T.

make ſuch great progreſs among the ancients *.

The whole body of the people, underſtanding their intereſts, affected by harmony, and habituated to emotions, hearkened attentively to their orators, and their ſuffrages were not confined to vain marks of applauſe. Honours, dignities and commands were decreed to thoſe who had made themſelves maſters of the paſſions. What torrents of eloquence muſt have fallen from men of talents animated by ſuch powerful motives! The hope or fear excited by the geſtures and movements of

* Some funeral orations of Boſſuet and Flechier, and a few ſermons of Bourdaloue, might be compared with the fineſt orations of the ancients. But we ſpeak of the art of eloquence, which was the operating and deciſive principle of every deliberation, which led away the multitude, and opened the road to honours; of that art of ſpeaking which is peculiar to republics. There was certainly a greater number of eloquent men, and the ſtudy of every thing which could increaſe the illuſion of words was the object of general application.

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an agitated multitude, preſſed on every ſide both the mind and ſoul, and elevated them to the higheſt degree of power and expreſſion.

The ancient languages have, by means of long and ſhort ſyllables and accents, a particular harmony. Inverſions give more livelineſs to proſe and verſe, and break the uniformity of methodical ſtyle. Narrative, converſation, declamation, harangues, all were muſical with the ancients: the laws even were noted among the Greeks: the public crier was ſubjected to a declamation, which was a kind of ſinging *. It is not the ancient authors only which we are to compare, the Greek and Roman people muſt be oppoſed to thoſe of modern times. The minds of the Greeks and Romans were ſuſceptible of the moſt rapid ſucceſſion of the livelieſt impreſſions. Their taſte and judgment

* CAIUS GRACCHUS was accompanied, when he harangued, by a man with a pitch-pipe, who gave him the tone.

were continually exercised and improved by the contemplation of master pieces of art of every kind. The multitude was ardent, and always agitated by some great interest. The habitude of seeing their suffrages solicited inspired the people with a noble pride. The meanest citizens who fell in war were honoured with public funeral rites; perfumes were thrown upon their funeral piles, and the most illustrious personages pronounced an oration celebrating their courage and virtues.

Instead of a delicate and sensible people, and proud of its power, we have a populace vulgar and ignorant, and many persons, superior by their fortune and profession, deserve not by their taste and learning to be distinguished from the lowest classes. Among the ancients there was no interval between a celebrated artist and men of the highest rank. Every thing which excited emotions in the soul, had powerful pretensions with persons of sensible, delicate and energetic minds. Youth were

were eager to hear philoſophers, and the allurements of theſe were as ſtrong as thoſe of Phryne or Lais.

The republican ſpirit was equally favourable to hiſtory. Truth was ſpoken with greater boldneſs.—Tacitus thus expreſſes himſelf upon the ſubject—"Illuſtrious writers," ſays he, "have related remarkable events of the firſt ages of Rome, and of the reign of Auguſtus; but there came a time when the neceſſity of flattering diſguſted men with hiſtorical writing." If boldneſs of thought and rapidity of ſtyle give the firſt rank to ancient hiſtorians, it muſt alſo be allowed, that they had more intereſting ſubjects to exerciſe their talents upon than thoſe which modern hiſtory preſent. The ancient annals of France, England, the Germanic empire, and of the people of the north, cannot be read without diſguſt. Every thing in them is barbarous, the names even of their heroes are more diſſonant than thoſe of the Iroquois. It requires no inconſiderable courage to ſearch the ruins of

antiquity wherein ſome of the ancient monuments of our conſtitutions lie buried. Charters, abbey regiſters, the veſtiges of ridiculous and contradictory cuſtoms and confuſed laws muſt be carefully examined. Let the *Cours plénieres* of our kings be compared to the feaſts and games of the ancients. How ſtupid was the magnificence on thoſe days of pomp, when our monarchs were ſerved on horſeback! Inſtead of that ſimplicity, which ſome take pleaſure in attributing to our ancient language, vulgarity, inſeparable from barbarity, is its real characteriſtic.

There are few hiſtorians among the moderns which can be compared to Thucidides, Xenophon, Salluſt, Livy, and Tacitus. Hume and Robertſon appear to approach them the neareſt. They, perhaps, would have overtaken them, had they written in their language, and had had as intereſting events to relate. Tacitus would not have riſen to the elevation which characterize his thoughts, had he not written in an age wherein a remembrance

brance of the defenders of an expiring republic was ſtill preſerved, and when the effervescence given to the mind by a long exercise of liberty, impetuouſly carried it to the ſeat of crimes and exceſſive authority. None but minds habituated to extreme ſenſations could carry vices to exceſs, as I will take the liberty to ſay, virtue itſelf had alſo been.

The ancients are again very ſuperior in the arts. In Grecian ſtatues there is a juſtneſs and nobleneſs which the moderns find difficult to attain. Grecian forms ſtill ſerve as models for fine proportions, and the fineſt plans of architecture are imitated from ancient monuments.

I am of opinion, that the cauſe of this kind of ſuperiority in the ancients may be found in their organization and climate. The air is more pure and elaſtic in Greece, and the eye there reaches farther than with us. The organization of the Grecians was finer, their imagination more lively, and their

their mind more ſuſceptible of different impreſſions than ours. They had conſequently a more juſt idea of what was excellent. The influence of climate was anciently known; the condenſe air of Bœotia was remarked and oppoſed to that of Attica which was clear and piercing.

Theſe reaſons are, perhaps, inapplicable to painting, as it appears that the moſt celebrated painters were ignorant of the laws of perſpective. In every thing elſe belonging to the art they ſurpaſſed cotemporary nations, and ſtill ſurpaſs the moderns in the elegance of figure, in delicacy, drawing, and compoſition.

The nature of government joined its influence to that of climate, in the progreſs of the arts as well as in the perfection of every object which intereſts the mind. Liberty inſpires men with noble ideas of themſelves: in countries where the career of honour is open to every citizen, where celebrity and ſuperiority of every kind lead to the moſt elevated rank, the ſoaring of the

the mind muſt neceſſarily be more animated. Men there enjoy ſuch a ſecurity of perſon as permits them to give their whole application to one object.

In republican countries every one is ſubject to the judgment of the multitude, and its real, impetuous, and noiſy applauſe fills the ſoul with enthuſiaſm, and rouſes every faculty.

The ſame emulation may exiſt in monarchical countries, but the monarch muſt be animated by a ſtrong admiration of talents and the arts, and ſtimulated by the love of glory. Auguſtus, Leo X. and Louis XIV. gave luſtre to the ages in which they lived, and their propitious influence multiplied about them maſterpieces of art of every kind. Auguſtus converſed with Virgil and Horace; the palace of Leo was open to the learned. Louis XIV. looking at his watch, ſaid one day to Boileau—*Remember that I have always one hour in the week to give you.* By means of ſuch encouragement, more efficacious

cacious than preſents, the ſoaring of genius is excited in monarchies. The prince is almoſt omnipotent there; he has in ſome meaſure the power of creating; but he muſt have ſentiment and volition. In republics every thing is derived from the conſtitution.

I have run rapidly over the different arts in which the ancients excelled. The reſult is, that in poetry, if the epic poem be excepted, they have their equals, and that there are kinds of poetry in which the moderns have excelled them; that the ancients have the advantage in orators, hiſtorians, and the fine arts, painting excepted, in which the pre-eminence may be given to the moderns; that they were ſuperior to us in dancing and declamation; that there are talents of which our coarſer organs prevent us from forming an idea, as in that part of muſic called hypocritical, which conſiſted in imitation, and regulated the geſtures proper for every ſituation. The art of geſticulation was of the greateſt importance among the ancients.

They

They knew how to multiply the expreſſions of ſentiments, and render all their colourings and degrees perceptible. Every thing was harmony, and the Grecians called an unnatural or a falſe geſture a ſoleciſm of the hand. Harmony was not confined to the few, all the people were ſuſceptible of every kind of it; they were fond to exceſs of theatrical amuſements, and their minds were open to the moſt delicate impreſſions.

Such was their ſuperiority of every kind, that Rubens thought frequent exerciſe gave to their bodies a more perfect conformation, which preſented to artiſts the fineſt models, and gave great advantages to their productions. They had more lively pleaſures than we have, and more ſenſations, becauſe they had more ſenſibility. The fine ages of Greece ſeem to preſent human nature in its vigour, like the ſpring of life, wherein every thing is emotion and pleaſure. When the blood is frozen with age, it is difficult to conceive the emotions, fire, and pleaſures of youth; ſuch,

ſuch, perhaps, is the ſtate of the moderns. Our utmoſt imagination is ſcarcely ſufficient to form an idea of the extreme ſenſibility of the ancients reſpecting the arts, or of the ſenſations they felt, and which they had in ſome meaſure created.

Slavery even was a ſource of talents. Slaves were inſtructed in philoſophy and the arts. Humane maſters looked upon them as children of their family, and reaped the fruit of the education they gave them. Others made them objects of ſpeculation, and ſold, at a conſiderable price, thoſe who poſſeſſed diſtinguiſhed talents *.

It muſt moreover be obſerved in favour of the ancients that they more quickly obtained the perfection of talents. We have been ſeventeen centuries, with all the aids they left us, in forming our lan-

* In one of Cicero's orations it appears, that a ſlave was eſtimated at upwards of 60,000 livres of our money.—Upwards of 2,600 l. ſterling. T.

guage,

guage, and in approaching their excellence. They carried talents to the utmoſt limits in ſix or ſeven hundred years, calculating from fabulous times and the foundation of Rome. The firſt ſoarings of the ancients were rapid. Homer flouriſhed in the earlieſt age of Greece, and the epocha of the foundation of the republic of Athens is that of the ſeven ſages. The Gauls, in the times of the firſt kings of Rome, were as far advanced in civiliſation as the Romans, and it has not been until after the lapſe of twenty centuries that they have, in ſome things, raiſed themſelves to nearly the ſame degree of elevation. Whence comes this inequality, if it be not from the difference of climate and inſtitutions?

The governments of the different countries of Greece were inſtituted by enlightened men. Moſt of our modern governments have, on the contrary, barbarians for their founders. Among the ancients there were more men of learning and eloquence, as in the preſent age we ſee in Geneva,

Geneva a greater number of well informed perſons than in cities much more conſiderable.

It is alſo to be preſumed, that the ancients had the advantage over us in agreeable, brilliant, and amiable qualities. They were more ſuſceptible, animated and delicate. Cicero ſays, The Athenians could hear nothing that was not clear and elegant. The faculties of the mind were, among the Greeks and Romans, objects of pretenſion, and the ambition of young men was to ſpeak in public.

Amiable perſons, more animated and ſuſceptible, and whoſe minds were enriched with general knowledge, muſt have been very ſuperior to the *agreeable* men of our time: it muſt alſo be allowed, that an ancient coxcomb was more eminently ridiculous than one of the preſent age, however we may be inclined in this reſpect to do juſtice to the moderns. Moſt of our young men reſemble wines which are tart when new, and when old inſipid. Some young

young perſons are ſeducing by their agreeable manners: but have not we the idea of an Alcibiades, in whom all the brilliant advantages of nature are conſpicuous, governing the people of Athens, ſeduced by his wit and gracefulneſs, engaging them by his eloquence to reſolve upon war, choſen by his talents to conduct it, deciding upon peace, and preſiding at treaties, conciliating to himſelf the affection of Socrates and Pericles, and reigning over women by the charms of his mind and perſon?

Let the life of a young man of the preſent age be compared with that of an Athenian. The latter heard the intereſts of his country diſcuſſed, gave his advice upon peace and war, and captivated the people by his eloquence. He elevated himſelf with Socrates and Plato to the higheſt ſphere of reaſon, and afterwards went to hear, under magnificent porticoes, the fineſt verſes recited in the moſt expreſſive and harmonious manner—the fineſt monuments and maſter-pieces of painting

and ſculpture were continually before his eyes; the ſtatues of his father, brother, and friend, inflamed his ſoul; he gave entertainments to an amiable and enlightened people, went to the Olympic games and diſputed the prize with his moſt eminent fellow citizens, with whole cities and with ſovereigns.

Another compariſon not leſs ſtriking, and as much in favour of the ancients, preſents itſelf to the mind: that of ſtateſmen, generals, and men of virtue. Were I to undertake to prove by facts the ſuperiority of the ancients in the high employments of human faculties, I ſhould be under the neceſſity of giving an abridgment of the Greek and Roman hiſtories. I will content myſelf with aſſigning the motives which determined men of antiquity, and thoſe by which the moderns are principally governed. The nature of effects may be preſumed from the ſtrength or weakneſs of the impulſive motive. In the governments of Greece and Rome every citizen was equally called to great employ-

employments; valour, eloquence, an enthuſiaſtic love for the public weal, a ſuperiority of mind, and an energetic ſoul, opened the way to honours. The conſequence was, that general emulation was ſtrongly excited, and that a greater number of perſons made trial of their abilities. The people being the ſupreme judges of talents, qualities and conduct, the mind was not contracted by the neceſſity of humiliating condeſcenſions. I agree it was neceſſary to pleaſe the people; but this was to be done by eloquence and great actions. Solicitations were uſed, but theſe even required to be accompanied by a great extent of underſtanding, brilliant qualities, generoſity, popularity, and a knowledge of the different inclinations of men. How great is the difference between theſe circumſtances and the intrigue in the anti-chamber of a protector, which requires no other knowledge than that of his weakneſſes!—between that flexibility of character which ſuffered men to humour the caprices of an ardent, inconſtant, ſenſible, delicate, and vehement

people, and that which permits the moderns to brave the rebuffs of a porter, and the diſdain of a valet de chambre, to get to a cloſet where they find a man abſent and embarraſſed with the moſt trifling diſcuſſion, who, from time to time, utters with emphaſis a few common place expreſſions, in a few moments after indicates the door by his eye and geſture, and refers them to a ſubaltern whoſe mediocrity they muſt careſs, as well as bear with his importance.

The ancients derive more particular preeminence from the various talents of their great men: They were generals, politicians, orators, and men of letters. There are among the moderns great ſtateſmen and great generals; but for the moſt part they have but one kind of talent. There are others of renown who are as great ſtrangers to taſte, talents, wit, and the arts, as the caliph who ordered the library of Conſtantinople to be burned. At preſent, every one is confined to the exerciſe of the duties of his employment, and ſeems

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to hold every thing foreign to them in the higheſt contempt. A judge, who has ſtudied the law and knows the rules preſcribed, looks upon letters as frivolous. The public even, loſing the remembrance of de l'Hopital, Harley, and Lamoignon, is diſpoſed to conclude unfavourably to the merit of a magiſtrate who has a taſte for letters; every thing which comes not within the duties of an employment generally appears to be folly and diſſipation to the narrow ideas of moſt moderns; it ſeems as if they were incapable of two kinds of merit. Let not what was ſaid at the time l'Eſprit des Loix appeared be forgotten, *Que ce n'étoit que de l'Eſprit ſur les Loix*—that it was wit only upon the laws.

I will not enlarge upon the virtue of the ancients. Liberty is the greateſt incentive to ſublime actions, and accompanied with every generous ſentiment, added to greatneſs of thought. When men love virtue their admiration of ancient republics ſeem continually to in-

creaſe. It is the golden age which they pleaſingly contemplate in imagination.

I have not ſpoken of natural or moral philoſophers, nor of phyſicians. With reſpect to theſe, much depends upon obſervation and experience. I am ſatisfied with having remarked, that the ancients became more ſpeedily enlightened than the moderns, and that they flew in the career wherein others have crawled along. They were far advanced in policy and morals. We have ſurpaſſed them in theſe, but our ſuperiority can be attributed to nothing but the lapſe of time, and the progreſſion of accumulated knowledge. Antiquity was like a ſublime and premature genius extinguiſhed in the middle of its career. It muſt not be imputed to its diſadvantage, that it had not time to conceive and execute; from the rapid progreſs of the ancients, every thing ought to be preſumed in their favour. If a tortoiſe went in one day over a ſpace of ground in the middle of which a ſtag had periſhed, ought

ought I to do honour to the tortoiſe becauſe he had reached the limits? I think we ought to believe that antiquity would earlier have produced a Bacon, a Newton, a Monteſquieu, and a Buffon; but theſe ſuperior luminaries do not, on account of their later appearance in modern times, make the balance incline leſs in our favour either in extent or elevation of genius. If the ancients were ſuperior in talents and ſentiment, they owed theſe advantages to their language, climate, and government. It is not the wit or talents of the moderns that I oppoſe to the ancients. Had Voltaire been born in Greece or Rome, he would have been ſuperior to what he was. The ancients were nationally and individually more ſuſceptible and enlightened than we are. This is principally what I have endeavoured to prove.

I have ſhewn what elevated and animated the ancients, and will endeavour to point out the cauſes of degeneration

in the moderns. Great talents are uſeleſs in the way to high preferment. The ſwiftneſs of a vigorous courſer was neceſſary in the Olympic games, but the ſlow and ſure ſteps of the mule are beſt ſuited to the uneven road of fortune, and the ſlippery paths of courts. When a government is firmly eſtabliſhed, and interiorly calm and ſolid, eaſy impulſions give to every thing an equal movement, nothing more than the continuation of eſtabliſhed order is neceſſary, and to this effect prudence is ſufficient. We read in Thucidides, that great genius was unneceſſary in government, and this truth is applicable to various circumſtances. As in mechanics, the invention of ſimple machines has conſiderably diminiſhed the number of hands formerly employed, ſo men of genius become, by the adoption of rules and forms, leſs neceſſary in governments. But before they are judged uſeleſs, we muſt be aſſured that the plan of adminiſtration be as perfect as poſſible. If the political organization be vicious,

vices

vices will be multiplied by a ſtubborn adherence to forms adopted without ſufficient deliberation.

The difference of rewards is an obſtacle to the efforts of the mind. Would the ſublime geniuſſes of which antiquity only gives us examples, as it offers us monuments aſtoniſhing to the imagination; would theſe celebrated men have had in our time the ſame elevation? The principles of ambition not being the ſame, the efforts of genius would be conſiderably more weak. Let us compare the honours of triumph, the elevation of ſtatues, and the inſtitution of public feaſts with the diſtinction of a ribbon; the ſpoils of the richeſt nations, with a penſion; the acclamations of the multitude, with the inanimate eulogium of a man in place. Effects, as I have obſerved, may be eaſily judged of by motives. The excellence of monarchical government conſiſts in doing every thing at the leaſt poſſible expence, and in rendering

dering great men unneceſſary. This kind of government reſembles a calm ſea, without ſhoals or rocks, where able pilots are not ſo requiſite as in a ſea more agitated. It is in republics, that great men riſe up and diſplay their abilities. They are like lightening which breaks forth in the midſt of a ſtorm. Shall we regret the time of the league, becauſe it preſents ſeveral men of ſuperior talents? Le Balafré and l'Amiral de Coligny cannot exiſt in a well governed ſtate. The intrepid Molé would, in our days, be no more than an upright magiſtrate; he would not have diſplayed his courage and virtues. The cardinal de Retz an intriguer or an obſcure debauchée.

If great talents be uſeleſs, except in critical times, it is evident that men of ſuperior minds will never deſire to obtain high employments; and if ſome accidental circumſtance, or the judgment of the prince ſhould call them to adminiſtration, they could not maintain their ſituation

ſituation without much pain to their feelings. A man of an enlightened mind ſees in an inſtant what he alone can conceive and execute, and if he be obliged to renounce it, and reduced to do that which is within the reach of the moſt moderate talents, he becomes quickly diſguſted. It might alſo happen, that having but little knowledge of trifling forms, and neglecting the petty details in which men of mediocrity take pleaſure, he would be judged ſo much the more incapable as his genius was more elevated. Such men will always be more diſpoſed to enlighten the age than to employ their time in functions conſiderable by their object, but to which common faculties are ſufficient. Monteſquieu, it is ſaid, refuſed a great place as a vigorous gladiator would have diſdained to deſcend to the arena with a feeble adverſary. Europe ought to be obliged to him for having preferred the honour of inſtructing to the momentary pomp of a place, which any other perſon might fill. What employment

ployment was worthy of exerciſing his genius, or would have given him an opportunity of manifeſting that depth of penetration which extended to the moſt hidden cauſes; that extent of underſtanding which embraced the moſt diſtant relations, and that talent of rendering the ſublimeſt conceptions in the moſt lively, conciſe, and brilliant manner? There are generally, in modern governments, many men of buſineſs, and capable of judging, but ſtateſmen and men of genius fit to become legiſlators are very few in number.

Tacitus, in ſpeaking of men called to government employments, takes care to ſay, *He was neither ſuperior nor unequal to public affairs.* The reſult is, that there is a degree of talents very ſuperior to public buſineſs, properly ſo called. "There are men of wit, ſays Swift, who are commonly looked upon as incapable of buſineſs, and who are really above it. A fiery and generous ſteed may carry a pack-ſaddle, but he is too good to be put to this employ."

The

The difference of rewards, the nature of government, the intrigue of courts, and the narrow ſphere of affairs are in general the cauſes which render great men of every kind more rare among the moderns. Wit and genius are ſometimes diſadvantageous to thoſe who poſſeſs them. They inſpire tormenting inclinations and reſtleſs deſires, becauſe men have not an opportunity of acquiring the fame to which they aſpire. The mind ineffectually agitated is amuſed with vain glory, of which, at every moment, it perceives the inſufficiency.

The gift which particularly diſtinguiſhes man from beaſts, and by which he ſubjugates his fellow citizens, the gift of ſpeech has not the leaſt influence in the greater part of modern governments. The field for talents is circumſcribed in ſome places. None but ſacred orators and advocates general are permitted to diſplay the riches of their eloquence. The domination of little ſocieties alſo contribute to

to weaken the mind. They keep every one at a diſtance who announces a decided character, and are prodigal in their praiſes of men of mediocrity, whoſe advancement they facilitate. A liſt of perſons preferred to great employments, by reaſon of their modeſt talents, would be numerous.

THE END.

BJ
1054
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Considerations upon wit
and morals

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